

December 3

ADVENT 2017 MARY OF NAZARETH: WILLINGNESS

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT SCRIPTURE

Luke 1:26-53



- ²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,
- ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.
- ²⁸ And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.'
- ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.
- ³⁰ The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.'
- ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.
- ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren.
- ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.'
- ³⁸ Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.'

Mary of Nazareth: The Voice of Willingness

Mary's hometown of Nazareth was a tiny village around a water source. Nazareth comes from the Hebrew word *netzer*, which means "branch" or "shoot." The *netzer* was a promise of hope. The word used in Isaiah 11 pointed to the promise of restoration of Israel that had been cut down like a tree. From an insignificant village a young girl would be the seed of hope for Israel and the world. Mary's willingness to listen and believe the voice of the angel Gabriel set in motion the salvation of humanity.

Are we willing to stay awake to hear the voice of God even though we may not know what it means at the time?



The first Sunday of Advent begins the new liturgical year. Instead of focusing on resolutions about dieting or exercise as we often do with the secular new year, I encourage you to write down your **SPIRITUAL RESOLUTIONS** for this new Christian year. How might you embody Mary's willingness to accept God's call to unexpected journeys? In your faith journey of 2018, how will you answer this fill-in-the blank statement:

"YES, GOD! I AM WILLING TO ____."