

A Person Can Dream  
A Sermon for Pilgrim Church  
Rev. Reebee Kavich Girash  
December 10, 2023

SCRIPTURE READING Luke 1:46b-55

1:46b "My soul magnifies the Lord,

1:47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

1:48 for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

1:49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

1:50 His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

1:51 He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

1:52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

1:53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

1:54 He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

1:55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

A dream....

Every year of his life, Teddy has had a coat that fits him, a coat and warm socks, snow pants for sledding down the hill near his house. He has a house to live in, Teddy does, and good, healthy food. Plenty of good, healthy food, which his parents can buy at a grocery store near his house. And family - Teddy has loving and wise parents. And Teddy is safe. He goes to a school where every child has books and pencils and art class and excited teachers.

God has filled the hungry with good things...

Teddy's cousin Yurii lives in a safe place, too. Their family has never been in danger. They have never lived in a refugee camp. Bombs have never landed on their road. The water is clean and abundant. Their family has picnics among the trees. He is safe, and he will grow up to be a musician.<sup>1</sup>

Teddy's other cousin has chosen a new name, Kelly, and their whole family, and their school, and their friends - they have said yes! Kelly! And their grandma knit them a bright green scarf just to help everyone remember.

God has lifted up the lowly...

Teddy's aunt Maryam is a farmer. The fertile land that she lovingly tends brings forth fruit in abundance. Rain and sun come in balance, the seasons pass in beauty, there is sabbath for land and people. There is good work and good rest.

God's mercy is for those who are in awe of our Creator from generation to generation.

Teddy's whole family lives in a peaceful world, in a time of Shalom. Every faith, every ethnicity, every skin color is respected. Kindness and dignity are abundant. Nation does not lift up sword against nation; neither do they learn war any more.

...for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

A person can dream, can't I? We can dream, can't we?

This Advent season we are leaning in to hope. We've named the symbols of hope in this sanctuary, we've talked about prophets of hope who work, actively, to make the world a better place. Today we learn of a vision of hope offered by a remarkable young woman, Mary. Mary's dream. Mary, a teenager, is asked to do something extraordinary: to give birth to the Savior. And she says, Yes! Let it be with me

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<sup>1</sup> I am thinking of a child refugee from Ukraine, named Yurii.

according to your word. And not only does she say yes, but she begins to dream, and to see what the world could be. She is, you might say, pregnant with imagination. Pregnant with vision. Pregnant with hope.

And she sings! She sings, in a powerful voice,

Let me tell you, world, what wonders can be...

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...

Do you know what it means that Mary dreams, imagines, hopes?

She can see the big picture, and her part in it. She can see what the world can be - God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; God has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

She can see it!

She can see the story she has agreed to be part of, she can see what the child who will be the anointed one will mean.

Jesus could not have become Jesus the Christ without Mary the visionary.

Mary has a beautiful faithfulness in the midst of mystery - and even faithfulness when great difficulties come. Her belief is so powerful that she does not say, *maybe things will be better*. She says, God has helped us, in remembrance of God's mercy. Fred Craddock wrote that:

"So confident is [Mary's] faith that God's justice and grace will prevail that the expression of hope is cast in the past tense. Mary sings as though what shall be is already true."<sup>2</sup>

My soul magnifies the Lord - God is worthy to be praised - and the world will come around to God's ways of mercy and love and justice - the world is coming around to God's ways of mercy and love and justice - the world abides in God's ways of mercy and love and justice. Mary can see it happening.

Mary Luti says,

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<sup>2</sup> Fred Craddock, et al, Preaching Through the Christian Year, Year C, p.25

“I admire [Mary’s] *perceptive* faith—her capacity to perceive clearly a promised but (for most of us) still blurry world of divine justice and righteousness. And I admire her ability to inhabit that world now—to act and speak according to promised new conditions that have yet fully to appear. I admire Mary for her religious and moral *imagination*.”<sup>3</sup>

A prerequisite to building up God’s reign is being able to envision it. If we hope for a world where there is enough for everyone, a world where every child is safe and every person is treated with dignity and respect and no one uses power to hurt and creation is renewed - if we hope for a world like that —

- *Do we hope for a world like that??*

If we hope for a world like that - we have to imagine it. We have to envision it. And in seeing it, we have to say yes to giving birth to it.

Mary lived in a world of poverty, under Roman occupation, part of an oppressed Jewish community.

Yet, she dared to hope. She said yes, and she envisioned a better world, and she did her part to build it.

Today, the world is full of heartache and pain. There are wars in more places than I can count. Climate change weighs upon the future. Children are sleeping in motels and adults are sleeping in doorways.

What world will we imagine into being? What world do we dream about?

We dream a world where no one is hungry. We dream a world where everyone has a warm bed. We dream a world where every person is beloved. We dream a world of beauty. We dream a world of peace, oh mercy, we dream a world of peace. We dream a world in which the earth is cared for. We dream a world where community is abundant. We dream a world, and in dreaming for it, we say yes to it, and in saying yes to it, we build a world.

“We are all meant to be mothers of God, for God is always needing to be born.” - Meister Eckhardt

Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://sicutlocutusest.com/2012/12/07/hail-mary-full-of-imagination-luke-1-39-56/>