

20th December 2020 Advent 4

A thought...

Life is messy. Life is full of twists and turns and we can easily compare our lives with others and feel on occasions that our life is lacking. We could look at Mary's life and think how wonderful it must have been. But her life was messy...



Mary's marriage was in a mess: Mary had become pregnant during the period of betrothal and, under the law of the Torah, she faced divorce at the very least. Mary had become a disgrace to the family and an embarrassment to Joseph. Her marriage was a mess.

Mary's finances were in a mess: The census that Caesar Augustus had ordered and how Mary and Joseph had to return to Bethlehem to be registered but when they arrived, there was no room for them to stay anywhere. Well, really? No room? Or did they just not have enough cash? But Joseph was just a carpenter with little money, so to the stable they could only go.

Mary's community was in a mess. Mary was a good Jewish woman, growing up under the tyranny of an oppressive military dictatorship. In Mary's day, the world was a dangerous place in which to bring a child.

I wonder if there are times when we feel like Mary?

We look at our lives and we see chaos and mess:

- Covid 19 and our plans for 2020, many of which never happened I guess.
- Perhaps relationships are not how we would like them to be.
- Perhaps there is financial stress or employment is causing anxiety.
- Perhaps we feel trapped and unable to escape from our day-to-day pressures.
- A second lockdown...perhaps it all feels a mess?

Sometimes it seems such a stark contrast to the hopes and dreams we once held and we may wonder where God's favour has gone in our lives.

But, of course, something else was happening in this story about Mary...

Yes, her life was a mess: but there was an emerging miracle in that mess: Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World was emerging from her.

For Mary, the miracle was being obscured by the mess - but that did not mean that the miracle was any less real...

I wonder if there is a miracle in our mess?

Maybe it is obscured right now. But if we are able to look at the circumstances of our lives differently, perhaps we may get a glimpse of the miracle emerging.

Like Mary, we need to be able to look deeply into our circumstances and trust that God is growing a miracle inside us. If we can do that, we will be able to make some sense of the mess and learn to see it for what it is; the birthplace of a miracle. And then our faith in God will increase and we will be able to join with Mary and say: 'I am the Lord servant. May it be to me as you have said.'

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