



ECMN+

Advent Spiritual Practices 2022

Sacred Imagination

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favour! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Look! You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?' The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. And I tell you this too: your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' Mary said, 'You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said.' And the angel left her. — Luke 1:26-38

Try to imagine yourself as part of this scene. Paint a picture in your mind of the surroundings, the houses, the fields, the village, the weather, the sights and sounds and smells of the place. Are you a bystander, or alongside Mary, or are you alone there?

Imagine the arrival of the angel. Hear his words. Notice your reaction. Ask God to open your heart to hear and understand anything God may wish to reveal to you, personally, in this scene. Be still and let [God's] meanings arise unobstructed to your consciousness, and respond to them in whatever way feels right for you.

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The Be Still Prayer

To pray this prayer, take a deep breath and center yourself in God's loving, gracious presence. Then say "Be still and know that I am God." Pause for a moment to rest in the reality of God's company and companionship. Then repeat the verse several times, leaving off a word or a couple of words each time. The entire prayer goes as follows:

Be still and know that I am God
Be still and know that I am
Be still and know
Be still
Be

Move into a period of silent reflection, with your palms facing upward in a posture of receptivity.

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