



14 December 2014

“...God sent his Son, born of a woman...”

“When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman.” (Gal 4: 4). The Incarnation marks the fullness of time, not in the sense that time has become ripe and somehow produced the Son. On the contrary, the sending of the Son brings time to its fullness. *“For in him all fullness was pleased to dwell.”* (Col 1:19) His presence fills our time, and *“from his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace.”* (Jn 1:16)

In the fullness of time, God turns to Mary of Nazareth: *“Rejoice, O favored one; the Lord is with you...you will conceive and bear a son...Here I am!”* (Lk 1: 26-38). The angel does not greet the young woman by name - her name was Mary – but the angel calls her *Kekaritomene*, “full of grace.” *Kekaritomene* is a “divine passive.” God is the one acting, meaning more literally: “You are loved by God and forever.” The angel calls Mary with a new name which God thought of since eternity. Her name is *Beloved*. Finally, the woman called by name, pronounces her *Here I am*.

Mary’s answer is a total giving of self. The Virgin makes herself the welcoming womb. Jesus comes and inaugurates the new creation. A new relationship is announced to Mary, the beloved, for all eternity. Before being called to give something to God, the Virgin is called to welcome a gift from God. It makes no difference where he will be born, as she continues to trust him. Mary lives and walks with the presence of God. She will ponder all the words and events of Christmas and beyond. She will repeat every day of her life, *“Here I am!”*

Here I am! These words are repeated by those in love, even more so when their love becomes a “fool’s” love. Father Kolbe, the “fool of the Immaculata,” became the mad man of the Lord Jesus. *Here I am!* He repeats, and for the last time, in the camp of Auschwitz. From that dark night sprung a new light, uncontained by horrific barbed wire encircling the camp, a red rose of love grew from the metal thorns of hatred.

The barbed wire of base desires, resentment, grudges, and hate breaks when we trust God and his Word. The word of love given for all generations, when heeded, strips us of the barbed wire of apathetic and despairing hearts. Our dark nights were illumined like that of the shepherds so many years ago:

Do not be afraid;

for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

(A) Savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. (Lk 2)

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For the community