

**Luke 2: 1-7**

**In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.**

**This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.**

**All went to their own towns to be registered.**

**Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem,**

**because he was descended from the house of David.**

**He went to be registered with Mary,**

**to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.**

**While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.**

**And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn..**

**Meditation**

**MMMM.....**

**“to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child”**

**Funny...it is such a small line,**

**a little line really,**

**kind of tucked inside the larger story we all know so well....**

**Now, perhaps you have a family like mine...**

**If my family had been Mary’s family,**

**they would have been counting on their fingers:**

**ok: they were married on...**

**and their son was born on....**

**mmmmmm.....they'd figure out pretty quickly something fishy was going on!!**

**The circumstances surrounding the conception of Jesus has been shrouded in mystery and theology, mythology and doctrine from the get go.**

**In scripture and tradition, we have beautiful stories of the angel Gabriel inviting Mary to participate, with God and to be the Mother of God's son: the redeemer and messiah of God's people...**

**Mary has an experience of the Divine... and, in the words of Sr. Joan Chittister: she didn't ask her father, she didn't ask her rabbi, she trusted her own experience of God and said "Yes"**

**How did she do that?**

**How did she know that hers was an authentic experience of God?**

**That she just wasn't imaging things because, quite frankly what she was being invited to do was pretty out of the box.... especially in her time..**

**In the time of Mary and Joseph for a woman to become pregnant outside of marriage was a crime worthy of punishment by death by stoning.**

**By Law, Mary should have been brought naked before the Temple authorities, doused with cold water, then taken outside the city gates to be stoned to death.**

**But, that didn't happen.**

**In Mathew's Gospel we have the story of an angel now  
visiting Joseph in a dream and telling him to marry her...  
assuring him that she was doing God's will...  
pretty out of the box in his day...  
and so Joseph did... and he saved her and her child...  
from that awful fate.**

**How did he know that his quite unique experience of the angel  
was an authentic experience of God's messenger?**

**Yet, while those are valid questions  
the most important question for us is:  
Upon what values do we make our choices?**

**How does any of us know God's desire especially when it  
appears to be leading us outside what is proper...  
outside the laws and rules of our society and our religion?**

**I would suggest we use one criterion:  
any invitation that leads towards life...  
is an authentic invitation from the Divine.**

**Do you think you have had a "God Experience"?**

**What was asked of you?**

**What were you invited to do?**

**What were the consequences of accepting the invitation...**

**what were the consequences of declining it?**

**Mary and Joseph had their role to play in human history.**

**Mary was asked to give birth to Jesus and Joseph was asked to protect them.**

**What role, what purpose are we invited to play in and through our lives?**

**I believe that all of us, each of us,  
are invited to become a mother of God...  
whether we are woman, child or man!**

**and I believe it isn't really as risky as we might imagine it to be!**

**Each and every time we offer compassion beyond what is expected of us,  
we give birth to the Divine Mystery.**

**Each and every time we offer forgiveness beyond what is expected of us,  
we give birth to Divine Love.**

**Each and every time we offer kindness, joy and sustenance beyond what is expected of us,  
we give birth to the presence of God.**

**Now...perhaps that doesn't sound dramatic enough...  
perhaps we would like it to be a bit more dramatic and  
out of the box...**

**But think about how out of the box and uncommon kindness can often be?**

**Think about how easy it is to fall into slandering and complaining and whining  
when everybody else is doing it...**

**Think about how hard it is, at times, to act with courage and to stand with someone who is  
being bullied and harassed.**

**Think about, when no one is watching, how much we just might want to slant the truth a  
little bit, or not give our fair share....**

**These actions and ways of living and being may not be dramatic,  
although standing up to a bully actually is...**

but they do add to the grace of the world.  
They add to the positive energy of the world...  
They make visible Divine Presence in the world...  
They add to the Love of the world...  
and what is more important than that????

It has often been said that there are two ways of making a decision:  
out of fear or out of love.

When we choose fear, we feed fear, we grow fear,  
we increase the fear and anger and terror of the world...

But when we make our choices from Love  
then too we feed Love, we grow the Love  
and we increase the Love and Beauty in the world.

There are a lot of people feeding Fear these days.  
It's easy to get sucked into that vacuum.  
In Jesus' day, fear too was rampant.  
The oppression and domination of Roman rule,  
the extreme poverty ever present,  
the threat of horrific punishment if you dared to step outside the line...

Yet Mary and Joseph both said yes.  
They trusted themselves and they trusted their God.  
They choose to live their lives FOR Life...capital L.

So...How do you want to live your life?  
do you want to be a bearer of bad news, negativity and fear?  
or do you want to be a mother of God?

**The choice is up to each one of us.**

**Do you know what your answer might be?**