

December 23, 2018
When There Is No Room: Love

Ancient Reading ~ Luke 1:39-46

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my God comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Highest." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies YHWH, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

Contemporary Reading ~ adapted from Father Richard Rohr

Most people naturally feel that God must be pleased and placated. The isolated ego cannot imagine infinite and gratuitous love. Until we receive the Gospel on a cellular level, the little mind processes reality in some form of "tit for tat." As a result, people spend more time fearing and trying to control God than actually loving God. In fact, we do not really know how to love God. When one party has all the power—which is, for many, the very definition of God—the only natural response is fear, denial (practical atheism), hiding, or seeking to manipulate the situation. The flow of giving and receiving in a love relationship is not possible with such an imbalance of power. Love requires some capacity for equality and mutuality.

The only way for this pattern to change is for God, from God's side, to shift the power equation and come to us in a vulnerable position. Jesus is the living icon of this power-shift: God becoming powerless in Jesus. God took the initiative to overcome our fear and hesitation. Jesus, the self-exposure of God (Hebrews 1:3), made honest, intimate relationship between God and humans imaginable! Seeing God in the form of a small baby radically illustrates this shift in power.