

A Reflection on the Second Week of Advent

Courage

Any mother who has ever been with child in faith, who has ever been pregnant in hope, has rushed to the friend, the compatriot, the spouse, the family, and announced the good news. The promise is terribly precarious. Anything can happen, suddenly, brusquely, and definitively. But the hope remains and over time faith's long labor yields life.

In some ways, I think, God is most appropriately thought of as a mother. What an act of courage it takes to complete the task. What a demand upon the ego, one's time, one's plans, one's privacy. There can never again be a thought of oneself alone. One's world is now invaded by the invitations and intrusions of the unplanned visitor, the unexpected guest. Pregnancy is the emergence of the other within, an other that is one with oneself, but not oneself. All love is borne this way.

Visitation is not only the paradigm of God in our lives. It is also the way we enter each other.

Our loves and hopes are fragile, growing things. They require nourishment; they take time. Nothing great and enduring happens fast. So we wait; we trust. Could we believe that the promise God wove into our very souls might give birth to something big? Could we hope that something so small and fragile in us could someday walk free and upright and joyous?

The question of every mother who ever birthed a child is the question of our own dear God birthing us, calling us into a precarious existence.

Is it worth it all? "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment." So it was with Mary. So it is with God.

