



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4

THE ANGEL GABRIEL FROM HEAVEN CAME

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
“All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

“For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honor thee;
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favored lady.” Gloria!

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924

A rabbi friend told me that the Hebrew word for blessing and the Hebrew word for knee, share the same root-word. The rabbis, therefore, teach that God’s blessing is anything that brings you to your knees. Whether you drop to your knees in thanksgiving or find yourself crumbling to the ground in despair, God’s blessing is that God is with you.

A blessed mother thou shalt be...

This is not a promise that all will be well for Mary... that life will no longer include suffering, that her heart will never again break, that she’s in the clear. A blessed mother she will be because God will be with her. Always. In moments of praise, in seasons of loss, in times of joy, and in her deepest grief. You know the rest of the story. She will feel all these things, deeply. This son of God will be nourished by her womb and given life through her body. This son of God will learn how to be human by watching her. And she will follow him as he journeys the path of this holy and heavy call. She will follow him, all the way to the cross.

Through it all, God’s blessing is God’s promise to be with her. To make sure Mary never forgets this, her son is named Emmanuel – God with us.
God’s promise to Mary, is also God’s promise to you. And to me. And to your neighbor.

Emmanuel...God is with us.

May you never forget this truth. May this truth remind you that wherever you go and whoever you encounter, you are in the midst of God’s sacred presence. May you live and love accordingly. Amen.

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