

The Season of Advent: Year C, Week 4

Every family has unique and cherished traditions and stories. The oldest members are often the keepers of these riches and pass them on from generation to generation keeping alive a treasured link between past, present, and future.

By including the story of Mary visiting her pregnant cousin, Elizabeth, the Gospel writer Luke gives us a rare glimpse into female friendship, motherhood, and familial support. The LGBT community is a big family, and, as such, it offers the potential for a collective story and tradition. This Sunday opens up the perfect space to reflect on your own story and tradition, and knot it into the threads of the great LGBT story.



LUKE 1: 39-45

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said –

“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how can this be, that the mother of the Messiah should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy.

Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

For all the readings for the Fourth Sunday of Advent click [here](#).

FOR REFLECTION

1. Jesus defined family as more than a biological reality (Matthew 12:50). As an LGBT person or ally, who is family to you and how has your family – traditional or chosen – shaped you to be a conduit of God’s love and holiness? What family stories or traditions do you bring that add color and texture to LGBT history, spirituality and pride?
2. Elizabeth and Zechariah are seniors recruited for a mission. They model intergenerational joy and sing songs of praise to the God who gives life (Luke 1:67-79). How do you envision yourself growing old? What are some of the joys and challenges you anticipate as an LGBT senior? Like Elizabeth and Zechariah, would you be open to extraordinary changes late in your life?
3. Elizabeth’s comment to Mary -- “How can this be that the mother of the Messiah should come to me?”-- suggests delight, awe, surprise and gratitude. Has the Mother of God invited you into her holy family? If so, what feelings did it inspire in you? Mary journeyed with Jesus to the foot of the cross. How has she stood with you through your trials as an LGBT person or ally?
4. Loneliness and social isolation are realities as we age. Older people who are LGBT are more likely to be single or live alone and not have children to care for them. The stories of the Annunciation and Visitation implies that we may be led to people, places and situations that we may never imagine. How can you contribute to a real-life social network to support and care for LGBT elders and encourage a mutual exchange of tenderness?
5. Is Advent and Christmas, with its emphasis on family and relationships, a happy or anxious time for you? Given your own unique gifts, story and tradition, how can you be an invaluable ministerial resource to those with unique emotional needs at this time of the year?

PRAYER

A Modern Magnificat

My soul sings in gratitude.
I’m dancing in the mystery of God.
The light of the Holy One is within me
and I am blessed, so truly blessed.

This goes deeper than human thinking.

I am filled with awe
at Love whose only condition
is to be received.

The gift is not for the proud,
for they have no room for it.
The strong and self-sufficient ones
don't have this awareness.

But those who know their emptiness
can rejoice in Love's fullness.

It's the Love that we are made for,
the reason for our being.

It fills our inmost heart space
and brings to birth in us, the Holy One.

– [Joy Cowley](#)

