

Sermon 1  
Anglican Church of Freiburg  
Luke 1:39-56

How do we understand the true worth of a person or an organisation including the church? We have heard of several parameters. They included Intelligence Quotient, Emotional Quotient, Social Quotient, Spiritual Quotient and now of late we hear of the word Adversity Quotient. The Ability to Cope with Difficult situations in Life or the Ability to help someone cope with difficulty situations in life.

Mary the young damsel who weaved a world of dreams around Joseph and the angel of the Lord who stirred the waters of those dreams. A pregnant virgin in a village context might have found life hard. She wanted to get off from the maddening crowd. She was perhaps looking for a safe space far away.

1. A PLACE TO GO TO- IN THOSE DAYS Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country
  - (i) Those Days- Those days were difficult days. Days of anxiety. Days of perplexity. Days of pain. Days of confusion.
  - (ii) Mary. Mary perhaps did not know anything. That her baby boy one day would walk on waters, save our sons and daughters, calm the storms. That she was carrying the son of God in her womb.
  - (iii) Set Out- Imagine a young damsel having to set out from home. Go to a far away land. This leaving home by choice is a not an easy decision.
  - (iv) Went with Haste- The migrant worker, the guests to the nations, have you seen them walk with haste- to escape from the place they are running away from and to reach the place where they do not know much about.
  - (v) Judean Town in the Hill Country- Nazareth to Judea was about 90 miles and would have been easily more than a week of hasty walk. In that site today stands the Church of the Visitation- in Ein Karem- in the western outskirts of Jerusalem.
  
2. A PERSON TO GO TO- where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth
  - (i) The experience of struggle that Elizabeth and Zachariah went through despite being of the priestly clan. Mary perhaps knew that the people who have gone through this before would understand the pain of others better.
  - (ii) The experience of God encounter. Mary would have heard about the God encounter of Elizabeth and how the angel Gabriel met with them in the sanctuary.
  - (iii) The experience of a late pregnancy- Well there is nothing too late for God nor is there anything too early for God. The mystery of the perfect timing (perfektus timing) of God is something we should learn to live with.
  - (iv) The experience of a pastoral heart and a pastoral home that Zechariah and Elizabeth were used to as part of their long tryst with vocation.

3. A PROMISE TO GO TO- Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

- (i) Child Leaping in the Mother's Womb- Elizabeth should have been surprised to see Mary walking in. There was perhaps no way to pre-inform. But when the children in their mothers wombs experienced the presence of each other there was the leaping with JOY.
- (ii) No pointing of Fingers, No Blame Game- Affirmation Mary experiences. Elizabeth calls her the blessed one.
- (iii) The prophetic call of the Mother of My Lord. Mary still would not have comprehended the mysteries of what the angel Gabriel told her. But here is Elizabeth asking her- Mary did you know that when you touch your belly you are touching God.

4. A PRAISE TO GO OUT WITH- MAGNIFICAT IS MARY'S SONG OF PRAISE

- (i) Moments of Vulnerability wherein we Magnify God. Perhaps that was the moment of Mary's reckoning. In her omega point she saw the greatness of God. A fresh God understanding.
- (ii) Pain wherein we Rejoice in the Lord. Mary declares forth aloud- My spirit rejoices in the Lord.
- (iii) Assurance that the Lord is with us in our lowliness and brokenness. It is Mary's testimony that God remembers us in our low points and is gracious and magnanimous to lift us up from miry pits and help us put our foot on rocky grounds.

And Mary decided to stay there for three months.....

This little journey reminds us of several people around us today looking for a place, a person, a promise and an opportunity of praise

As disciples of Christ and as the Church today are we called to be the home of Elizabeth- Welcoming, Embracing and Reassuring.

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