

December 13, 2020

Dear Friends,

As the Feast of Christmas approaches and as we celebrated two feasts of Our Lady this past week (December 8—Immaculate Conception; December 12—Our Lady of Guadalupe) my thoughts have been drawn to the person of Mary as we prepare for Christmas. The general consensus is that Mary was a young maiden perhaps as young as fifteen or so when the Father in heaven sent the Archangel Gabriel to visit her and announce God's plan of salvation for us—and her role in that plan.

Fifteen is young. Really young. In every culture young. But there is ample evidence in Sacred Scripture of instances when God called other young people to do something special for him. Some even earlier than fifteen. (From my mother's womb God called me...). Isaiah the prophet. Jeremiah the prophet. Young Samuel. Even King David to become his anointed one was very young. John who will be known as the Baptist was called from his mother's womb. Ruth was young. Rachel too when she was affianced to Jacob.

Today none of this would be allowed. "No. You are not properly formed yet. You haven't completed your necessary socialization and formation yet. You do not have the requisite maturity. Wait until you get a little older." That, of course, is but human wisdom. It does not even dare to ask God what God wants for this person. It is as if the person's age is somehow a preventive reality that God cannot penetrate.

Are you kidding me? It does not really matter how old you are if the Lord is speaking to your heart. Some saints are dead at the end of their teenage years or at the beginning of their twenties. God knows what He is about. God knows how appropriate the timing of his calling out to Mary really is. His timing is perfect timing. His timing is impeccable timing. Our only problem is that we really don't have a sense at all of what God's economy is and how it unfolds. And so we tend not to even consider what the Lord might be asking of us—or of our children.

Lord what do you want to give to me. Lord what do you want to ask of me. Lord how can I best make the gift of myself to you? Lord, how can I help my son and my daughter discern whatever it is that you have in mind for them? Lord, where is your heart in this coronavirus? What lesson do you desire we learn? What are you asking us to realize? What is blocking my response to your grace?

There are very real questions and there are very real answers. Our children, as young as they are, are truly involved in all of this. Let us not just direct them. Let us also listen to them—to their questions, to their observations, to their suggestions. The Lord is most definitely at work.

Peace,

Mgr. McHenry