

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Jun 24th 2014

You knit me in my mother's womb. I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made. (Psalm 139:13-14)

We are never too old or young to be surprised by God. Zechariah and Elizabeth were resigned to their situation, when the child first settled into his mother's womb. Sputtering with doubt, Zechariah learned through months of silence to trust in God's sly ways. When their son arrived, his parents insisted on calling him John, one beloved of God from the start.

God finds us in many ways. Some, like Paul and Augustine, wander for years before falling to the ground at God's touch. Moved by a roguish spirit, the child John already is drawn into the desert to prepare the way of the Lord. The young David left his flock when the prophet called him to serve his people. Some paths seem direct while others are winding. I might wish to be knocked to the ground and blinded, but it is up to God how I receive my name.

Some seek God by running from the self. In their view, the self is inevitably selfish and must be abandoned if we are ever to become free. True, I can fall into a pit where nothing crosses the horizon except my own needs. But I am more than the pit; we are the wondrous work of God. If we are not astonished by our own being, something is wrong. There is no damaged part that cannot catch the light when I hold tight to the one who never stops forming me.

We cannot separate love of God, love of self, love of others, and love of the world. Like rising waters in spring, one flows into the next. This call extends to the ends of the earth. No one is alien to God. Everyone has a place at the table.

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