



# Advent Reflection

**Day #21**

**Saturday, December 19**

Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1: 5-25

The readings for the third week of Advent spoke to me in several ways. The stories overlap in that both involve difficulty conceiving children and are followed by the appearance of an angel who delivers the news that the couple would conceive. In the first reading, the child is Samson, and in the Gospel, the child is John the Baptist. The readings emphasized the Lord's impact on these children after birth: in the first reading, "The boy grew up and the Lord blessed him; the Spirit of the Lord stirred him," and in the Gospel: "He will be great in the sight of the Lord,... be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God." A meaningful sequence of phases in these passages is 1) a period of difficulty, 2) a resolution, and 3) sustained change. Most importantly, moving from the first to second phase happens with the help of God.

I have had a similar experience the past 12 months. It has been difficult to go without social interaction at work and with friends and develop a normal daily routine during the pandemic. However, a resolution occurred in June when my wife and I had our first child. This event not only affected my memory of the past, but it also created a new, sustained outlook for the future. ...

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...The benefits of staying at home before our daughter came into focus. My wife and I shared special time preparing our home before our daughter's arrival. Instead of traveling for work, my wife was able to relax at home during her pregnancy. Of course, the birth itself was a paradigm shift in my life. We now have a new member of our family to feed, nurture, and explore all the things in this world that we are so accustomed to but are brand new experiences for her. This moment solidified my belief in God and will no doubt change my life moving forward. My wife and I want our daughter to "to be filled with the Holy Spirit" and experience the happiness and comfort we feel with our faith, even during the strangest of years. The continuation of faith in our family is the sustained change.

In summary, I hope to keep listening and praying to God- devotion and consistency of faith is very important to me. Surprisingly, the benefits of faith and prayer are often realized when you least expect it (even in the middle of a pandemic!)

*Reflection by Holy Name Cathedral Parishioner David Puelz*