

E-DEVOTION FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15

In Luke chapter 1, the story is told of Mary going to share her good news with her cousin, Elizabeth. Elizabeth was also pregnant and in time she gave birth to a son. When people asked her what this new baby's name was going to be... she said, "His name is John." Everyone was puzzled as they had no relatives with such a name... naming a child something other than a 'family' name was unpredictable. When the people turned to the baby's father, Zechariah to question this strange decision, he wrote on a piece of paper... HIS NAME IS JOHN. It was after that; Zechariah was able to speak once more.

Unpredictable! That's what this Advent has been for most of us. We are living in a very 'unexpected' time. I was thinking about that and I remembered years ago when we had a Sunday School program in my first parish. As 'predicted' the program ended with the Nativity scene. The characters came up the aisle... first the angels, then the shepherds... the Holy Family... followed by the kings.

That year the congregation saw something 'unexpected.' The Sunday School superintendent had gone out on a limb and asked the children what part they wanted to play in the Nativity. A little curly headed fellow said... "I really want to be an angel!" (Now, in this place... a boy had never played the angel before). "No problem"... was the answer. Then little Cynthia said... "I want to be a shepherd!" Oh ... that was really 'unpredictable!' And to top it off, Marilyn decided she should be a KING! They all played their parts beautifully. But it was a Nativity Scene we had not experienced before.

That's how this Advent is shaping up for me. I'm finding myself in an unpredictable mode of preparation. And that's ok. Maybe taking ourselves 'outside the norm' isn't such a bad thing.

I have such great hope for our church, our country, and our world during this Advent season. I am hoping and praying that we can reach outside our normal selves and see things a little differently. After all... that's what this newborn child did. This child came into our world and set about doing things in a very 'unpredictable' way. We can too.

Wear your mask. Wash your hands, fold them and bow your heads. Pray for understanding and acceptance in this unpredictable time.

Pray with me: "Dear Lord, thank you for accepting us just as we are. Help us to show that same acceptance with one another. Fill our hearts with love, our souls with peace as we make ourselves ready this Advent. Amen. In Jesus' Name, Amen.