



A weekly reflection by members of the Precious Blood Community

December 20, 2023

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**Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
May it be done to me according to your word.”
Then, the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:38)**

Several years ago, a friend sent me a recording of a song named **Behold** by David Kauffman. Little did I know that single word would change my world and Advent season forever. Another friend reminded me of the words of Fr. Joe Nassal, C.P.P.S. “In a time where our Church has continued to instruct us to “behave,” Advent is a time for us to “behold” what great things God has done for us! All our actions begin from that great Love and Mercy.” Each following year has brought a deeper reflection into the word **Behold**.

Another friend has suggested I research the meaning of words in both Hebrew and Greek. That is another journey full of surprises. Hineni a Hebrew phrase comprised of two short words: ‘hineh’ and ‘ani’, meaning “here” and “I.” “Hineh” is translated more literally as **Behold**. In the Book of Isaiah 6:8, we hear the following: **And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, Here am I (hineni)! Send me.** Other similar responses of (hineni) are seen from Moses in Exodus 3:4; Samuel in 1 Samuel 3:1; Abraham in Genesis 22:1. Other examples are found in Genesis 1:29; 17:20; 27:6; 1 Samuel 14:33; Exodus 32:34; 34:40; Isaiah 7:14; 52:6; 58.9; 65:1. In Genesis 3:10 we do not hear Adam answer with (Hineni). He was hiding and evading God.

Jewish Cantor Matt Axelrod shares his insight to the Hineni Prayer recited during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur: **“More than a simple indication of being physically present in a location, the word “Hineni” is more of an existential expression. I am not only here, but I’m here. Spiritually, I’m all in. I’m prepared to reflect on who I am, what’s important to me, and how I can effect change for others.**

In the New Testament, we also see examples of **Behold**. John the Baptist: **Behold** the Lamb of God. On the cross, Jesus saying to his mother, “Woman, **Behold** your son. Then he said to the disciple, “**Behold**, your mother.” Etc.

Now to the **Behold** in the Magnificat and Mary's yes! Last month at our international small faith sharing group, we did lexio divina on the reading for today, Luke 1:26-38. There is a song called "Mary Did You Know?" and we turned our gaze on all the things we thought Mary did not know when she said her yes, her **Behold** to God. She did not know how Joseph would receive the news. She did not know she would have to travel in her last days of pregnancy on a donkey to Bethlehem and have her baby in a stable. She did not know shepherds and Wise Men would be visiting her in that stable. She did not know they would not be returning home; rather, Joseph, baby Jesus, and she would be traveling to Egypt and living as refugees for an unknown period of time. She did not know that on a pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem they would lose Jesus in the caravan and have to search for him. (That makes any mother's heart stop momentarily!) She did not realize he would become an itinerate preacher with disciples traveling all around preaching the good news of the kingdom and working miracles and healing people. She did not know that he would be arrested, tortured, hung on a cross, and die. She did not know that John would be taking care of her. She did not know he would rise again in 3 days and eventually ascend into heaven. I remember that during all of these things there were times she pondered all of this in her heart.

The beauty of Mary's **Yes** to God was her **Hineni**, her **Behold**, her **absolute trust in God**.

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This weekly reflection is made available to all who are part of our Precious Blood family. Feel free to share it with others. Would you be willing to write a reflection? If so, please contact Vicky Otto at votto@pbspiritualityinstitute.org