

Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.”

—Luke 1:38

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29

This past August, my husband and I traveled to the Holy Land with a group from Episcopal Relief & Development. We spent two days in Nazareth, the place where the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and announced, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.”

As I wandered the ancient streets – four months pregnant with my first child – my thoughts turned to Mary. Did her fear subside? Was she confused about what was happening to her body? Was she excited about the new life growing inside her? Like expectant mothers all over the world, I worried for my health and the health of the baby. In Nazareth I began to pray for all mothers, especially those without access to maternal and child healthcare, turning over the angel’s final words to Mary in the story of the Annunciation: “For nothing will be impossible with God.” May this statement of faith be the foundation of hope on which we build a vision for a world in which all mothers and children have access to health care.

—Meredith Brown