

As morning breaks earlier so the blackbird's song coincides with 'getting-out-of-bed' time. What better alarm clock could you want? But still there's a certain resistance in me to getting up even when the real alarm goes off. I've slept very well because I've left a window open and it's cool inside and out, so I'm torn between a few more moments of relative warmth under the blankets or facing the reality of life out there in the cold. *Here I am, Lord. I come to do your will*, with Augustine's proviso, *but not just yet, Lord*. And this is, probably, most of us, most of the time. Even Mary fights for a little extra time: *But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?*

How can this come about since I don't know how to speak in public? Since there are so many difficulties out there? Since I am alone, or ill, or unloved? And so on. And, like the monk or nun in the *Rule of St. Benedict* (68), it all appears impossible, but God knows us better than we know ourselves and angel or abbot or abbess gently sends the monk or nun back to their task to learn the dynamic of faith, for what we think is impossible may not be so in the wider perspective of God's love and knowledge. So what we think of as an act of faith in God, as we accede to God's wishes, to this prompting of the Holy Spirit, can just as well be seen as God's act of faith in us. *Everything is possible for one who has faith* as Jesus says in Matthew's gospel for, as it also adds in the footnote in the Jerusalem Bible, 'It allows God's power true play in us'. So the invitation to Mary is the invitation to us, too, each day, to let God's power free play in us and so discover, like Mary, Christ's presence within, closer to us than we are to ourselves and giving us that final gentle prompt to get out of bed and face the day.

Carpe diem — seize the day.

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