

# Advent 6th Dec: Charades



## The story continues...

And he (*John the Baptist*) will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time. “Meanwhile, the congregation waiting for Zachariah was getting restless, wondering what was keeping him so long in the sanctuary. When he came out and couldn’t speak, they knew he had seen a vision. He continued speechless and had to use sign language with the people.

When the course of his priestly assignment was completed, he went back home. It wasn’t long before his wife, Elizabeth, conceived. She went off by herself for five months, relishing her pregnancy. “So, this is how God acts to remedy my unfortunate condition!” she said.(Luke 1:17-25)

## Reflection

Here is one of the Bible’s more comical moments. We’re left to imagine for ourselves what body movements and facial gestures Zechariah conjured up. Maybe he swung his arms in an arc or puffed out his cheeks to portray the angel’s size and touched his lips with a finger and forced his eyes wide to show in amazement.

I suppose over time the memory of Zechariah’s attempts at Charades was dwarfed by the impact of the prolonged silence and the awe surrounding Elizabeth’s pregnancy. I wonder what it felt like to not speak in company for 9 months, or to Elizabeth his wife. I wonder about the mix of feeling excluded but also more aware of and attentive to others’ non-verbal signals.

## Exercise

Try to eat a meal in company without speaking. What did you notice?