

The Annunciation of the Lord

25 March



About the Annunciation

Today we celebrate two important events in our faith: The Annunciation of God becoming one of us in all things except sin, and Mary's unconditional but trusting obedience to God's will for her in her life and God's plan for human salvation.

Although Mary is the central figure in today's Gospel reading, it is God's actions that direct the events in the Annunciation story. The Angel Gabriel is the Lord's messenger.

What can we learn from the Annunciation?

God did not choose a rich or famous person to be the Mother of His Son. Instead, Mary's poverty and obedience were the qualities that determined His choice. When the Angel told Mary that she would be the Mother of Jesus she did not understand it but accepted God's will and declared herself ready to do what God asked. In this she is an example of humility and obedience for all of us. Just as Mary responded with 'Yes' to the Lord, we must do the same.

Just as God used a messenger to communicate with Mary, so too He uses us as messengers. Sometimes we are receiving messages, and other times the Lord is asking us to be a messenger. In both cases we must be open to what the Lord is asking of us. If it is like Mary to hear and act on the message, we must be willing to leave our own conveniences aside to put into action what God is asking of us. If it is to be a messenger, we must convey that message with enthusiasm, sincerity and conviction so that people know we are following Christ authentically.

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Collect

O God, who willed that your Word
should take on the reality of human flesh
in the womb of the Virgin Mary,
grant, we pray,
that we, who confess our Redeemer to be God and man,
may merit to become partakers even in his divine nature.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel

Luke 1:26-38

'I am the handmaid of the Lord'

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,
to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David;

and the virgin's name was Mary.

He went in and said to her,

'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.'

She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean,

but the angel said to her,

'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour.'

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Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus.

He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High.

The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David;

he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.'

Mary said to the angel,

'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?'

'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered

'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow.

And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God.

Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son,

and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month,

for nothing is impossible to God.'

'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary

'let what you have said be done to me.'

And the angel left her.

Antiphon

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son;

and his name will be called Emmanuel.

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Hymn for the Solemnity of the Annunciation

O Mary, our Mother, to whom Gabriel came
to announce you would give birth and that the Name
of your Son would be Jesus and He would win
vict'ry over Satan and bear all our sin.

You said that you did not know how this could be,
for you had lived all your life in chastity.
The Angel said the Holy Spirit would rest
upon you and make you of women most blest.

**You gave Him your answer, "Let God's will be done:
I will be the Mother of Jesus, the Son."**

You were not deterred by the things you would face
but you were prepared for the coming disgrace.

O Mary, as we face all our daily tasks,
let "yes" be our answer to all that God asks.

Our humility and obedience will be
example to all who our loving deeds see.

Text: Chris deSilva

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