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October 7: Our Lady of the Rosary

Gospel for the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, with commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 1:26-38*)

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!"

But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind

what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

And Mary said to the angel, “How shall this be, since I have no husband?”

And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth

month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.”

And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Commentary

When the Church offers these verses from the Gospel for today’s feast, we can stop and consider how so many artists have portrayed this scene, how often the liturgy expresses this key moment for our salvation, and how each day many Christians pause at noon to pray the Angelus and contemplate our Lady’s marvelous example.

To prepare the reader for such a marvelous event, the evangelist tells

us of an angel who is going to visit a young woman, a virgin living in a small town. He tells us that she is betrothed to a man from the house of David and that her name is Mary (v. 27).

A person's name is very important. God himself wanted to give his Son a name: "and you shall call his name Jesus" (v. 31). A name allows us to "personalize" someone, to talk about, invoke and love that person. The mention of the name of this young woman fills us with hope and joy. "If the winds of temptation arise, if you stumble on the reefs of tribulation, look to the star, call upon Mary. You will not go astray if you follow her, you will not despair if you call out to her, you will not be lost if you think of her. If she takes you by the hand, you will not fall; if she protects you, you will have nothing to fear; you will not become tired if she guides you; you will reach the goal safely if

she watches over you. And you will experience for yourself why it was said: *and the Virgin's name was Mary.*"^[1]

In each Hail Mary that we pray, we greet this young woman personally. We invoke the Lady with the sweet name as Saint Josemaría did,^[2] as the angel did, as God does. And we do so many times in each mystery, in each rosary. Today, the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, at the beginning of the month dedicated to this prayer, let us rejoice in our Lady as God does, “since God himself takes delight in such graceful beauty,”^[3] calling her Mary.

^[1] Saint Bernard, *Homily 2 on the Annunciation*, 17.

^[2] Cf. Saint Josemaría, *Holy Rosary*, First Joyful Mystery.

^[3] From the traditional Spanish prayer “Blessed be your purity.”

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