

March 25: Annunciation of the Lord

Gospel for March 25th, feast of the Annunciation of the Lord, and 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

The Gospel of Saint Luke introduces us to Mary, a young girl from Nazareth. The eyes of the Lord, who has chosen her to be the mother of his Son, rest on that girl from a distant town, far from the spotlights of the world.

The story of Mary is thus the story of a God who surprises us. And Mary allows herself to be surprised by the Angel's announcement. She doesn't hide her amazement. It is the amazement of learning that God wants to become man, and that He has chosen her to be his mother. A simple girl from Nazareth, who doesn't live in the palaces of power and wealth, who has not done extraordinary things.

It is the amazement of seeing that God is in love with her: that she is filled with God's grace.

God sees Mary as all-beautiful, full of grace.

How beautiful is Mary!

The expression "full of grace," so familiar to us, reminds Mary of the greatness of her vocation. She has been chosen to be the Mother of God and therefore has been preserved

from original sin at the very moment of its Conception.

“Full of grace” is the name God himself gives her to indicate that she has always been beloved, the one chosen to receive the most precious gift, Jesus, God incarnate.

When contemplating this scene, we too should be amazed. When contemplating our Immaculate Mother, all-beautiful, all-pure, so humble, without any stain of pride or presumption, we can recognize our true destiny, our deepest vocation: to be loved, to be transformed by love, by the beauty of God.

God has placed his loving eyes upon each of us too. Like Mary, He has chosen us before the creation of the world, to be holy and spotless in his sight.

Mary is always and forever the one specially loved.

And we too are always and forever loved.

God has a loving plan for each of us: that Christ be born in each of us, so that everything in our life is permeated by Christ, enriched by his divinity.

The Virgin Mary is totally open to God. She trusts Him, even when she doesn't fully understand. She allows herself to be surprised.

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word.”

God always surprises us, breaks down our schemes, puts our projects in crisis, telling us: trust me, don't be afraid, let yourself be surprised, get out of yourself and follow me.

He hopes that we will let ourselves be surprised: in the simplicity, in the

humility of our life. There he wants to show forth his power, his Love.

He gives us his Love that saves us, heals us, strengthens us. And He calls us to a divine adventure: to be God's look for others, his smile, his hands in this world.

He doesn't ask us for extraordinary things.

He only asks that we listen to Him and trust Him.

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