

Meditations: Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord (25 March)

Some reflections that can assist our prayer on the feast of the Annunciation.

- God divinizes our life
- Contemplating the life of Jesus
- A very human divinity

THE WORD became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory (Jn 1:14). On the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, we rejoice in the great mercy God has shown us by entering our world. We celebrate

Jesus of Nazareth, true God and true Man; we celebrate Holy Mary, who has become the Mother of the Lord. In a certain sense, we celebrate all of humanity – ourselves as well – because the mystery of the Incarnation shows us that our human nature has such a very high dignity, capable even of being raised to the divine through the action of grace.

In today's feast, our eyes are directed especially to Jesus, the Word of God made flesh. “I contemplate you who are *perfectus Deus, perfectus homo*, truly God, yet truly man, with flesh like my flesh,” Saint Josemaria said with astonishment. “He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, so that I should never have the slightest doubt that He understands me and loves me.”^[1] This truth of faith, confirmed by the historical event, is an inexhaustible source of peace for our soul. “God made

himself frailty to touch our frailties up close.”^[2]

At the same time, knowing that God has taken on human nature is also an invitation to let Him divinize every corner in our life. At the beginning of today’s Mass, we boldly ask God to carry out this transformation in us: “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.”^[3] The mystery of the Incarnation reveals to us that our existence has a dimension greater than just the human one, already good in itself. We are capable of leading a supernatural life, of seeing beyond the ephemeral, of loving with a strength that comes from God, through Christ, who is like us in so many ways.

HAIL, FULL OF GRACE, the Lord is with you (Lk 1:28). From her earliest years, Mary would have sensed God's closeness, perhaps by noticing his special care. But at the moment of the Incarnation, this awareness of God's closeness grew even stronger. Already here on earth, our Lady's life was intimately united to God's life. Mary experienced God's closeness in a unique way during the years of living with Jesus in Nazareth, amid the most ordinary daily activities. And when his public life began, she would continue to share many moments with Him.

Certainly, Mary's experience is unique; no one has been as close to Jesus as she was. Nevertheless, what we cannot see with our human eyes, we can see with the eyes of faith. Thus the contemplation of the Gospel is a privileged way to discover our

Lord's Humanity, which the Virgin Mary knew so well. We should strive to read these pages of the Gospel in the same way our Mother contemplated her Son's life. "For we need to know it well, to have it in our heart and mind, so that at any time, without any book, we can close our eyes and contemplate his life, watching it like a movie. In this way the words and actions of our Lord will come to mind in all the different circumstances of our life."^[4] —

The Catechism describes the transformation we experience when we contemplate Christ's life like this: "Contemplation is a look of faith, fixed on Jesus. 'I look at him and he looks at me': this is what a certain peasant of Ars in the time of his holy Curé used to say while praying before the tabernacle . . . The light of the countenance of Jesus illuminates the eyes of our heart and teaches us to see everything in the light of his

truth and his compassion for all men.”^[5] Like two people in love, without need for many words, one look is enough to be aware of the great and faithful love that envelops our life.

DURING THESE TIMES of trusting prayer with our Lord, we can learn so many gestures and words that will give us inspiration for our daily struggle. Contemplating the way Christ united divine love and human love can help us to give that same human tone to our own Christian life. Saint Josemaría often said that “to become God-like, to be divinized, we must begin by being very human.”^[6] The Solemnity of the Annunciation reminds us that God does not stay in heaven. Jesus shows us that He is a very human God: in his refinement with everyone, in his

closeness to the marginalized, in his concern for his disciples.

Thus our contemplation of Jesus, truly Man, feeds not only our prayer but also our Christian mission of service. He gives himself to us even physically, through his body: with his voice, with his hands that healed and blessed, with his arms that opened up to embrace the Cross. He does not present theories, but shows us with deeds how to put his teachings into practice.

Benedict XVI said: “The way God acted gives us a strong incentive to question ourselves on the reality of our faith, which must not be limited to the sphere of sentiment, of the emotions; rather, it must enter into the practicality of our existence.”^[7] The sacrifice that Jesus offers to the Father is his entire life; it is a self-giving that encompasses every second of his passage through this

world. This was also our Lady's attitude, who with her *fiat* on the day of the Annunciation trusted "in the love and promises of God, the only force capable of making all things new."^[8]

^[1] Saint Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 201.

^[2] Francis, Angelus, 3 January 2021.

^[3] Roman Missal, *Collect Prayer*, Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

^[4] Saint Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 107.

^[5] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2715.

^[6] Saint Josemaría, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 172.

^[7] Benedict XVI, Audience, 9 January 2013.

^[8] Francis, Speech, 26 January 2019.

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