

The Annunciation of Jesus' Birth

Grace: Pray for the grace to better know and understand Jesus so that your love for Jesus will grow and your desire to imitate him will increase.

Introduction:

You have reflected and increased your own awareness of the impact of sin in your life and on the world. By contemplating the Immaculate Conception of Mary, you have reflected on the subtle ways that God begins to respond to the reality of sin.

Imagine how the Divine Trinity looks down from Heaven upon the entire world. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit see how each person is suffering. They notice that left on your own you are likely heading toward things that will hurt and ultimately kill you rather than lead to your eternal happiness.



The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit say "Let us work the redemption of the human race" and thus they decide to send Jesus into the world and to become a man so as to save you and all of humanity.

When the time comes, they send the Angel Gabriel to visit Mary. Imagine what the house of Mary looks like. Go with the angel Gabriel into Mary's room. Listen to what the angel says to Mary and her response. How does her voice sound? How does Mary feel?

Having witnessed all of this, what is your response? What do you say to the Father, to the Son, to the Holy Spirit, to Mary, and to the angel Gabriel about God's plan? How does Gabriel's news to Mary impact her life? How does Mary feel to have Jesus growing inside of her? How do you feel knowing that Jesus is about to come into the world? What impact do you hope that Jesus will have on your life?

Isaiah 42: 1-9 The Servant of the Lord -

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope." This is what God the LORD says — he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. "I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you."

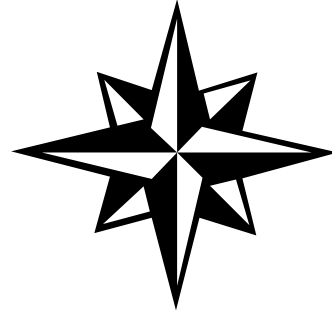
Luke 1:26-56 The Birth of Jesus Foretold - In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is His name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers." Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.



In these of similar words ... A little phrase stood out to me in this passage when Mary was talking to Gabriel. She said, "I am the Lord's servant." That stood out to me the most because it portrayed her willingness to do anything for God. I personally need to be like Mary and have the trust and love to do anything for God, to glorify His name. When I embedded myself into the situation with Mary talking to Gabriel, I felt a sense of worry, shock, and fear coming from Mary. She was shocked because of all women to be chosen, He chose her. I could see her face and the look of fear of what was coming out because she knew she would be carrying the Son of God. Despite her feelings though she still took the leap of faith and carried the Son of God because her faith and love for Him is more powerful than any other feeling she felt. When I put myself in Mary's shoes, I was scared out of my mind that I would mess up somewhere along the way, but I hope and believe that my love for God is so great that it would disregard all my thoughts and put my total trust in Him. I think Mary had a sense of security and was truly happier with Jesus inside of her. Even as a fetus, he is the Son of God and impacted and strengthened Mary's life from there on out. The fact of knowing that God sent his only son to save humanity is a humbling thought and makes me realize God doesn't demand perfection like my parents, coaches, and teachers do, but expects me to love and do my best to glorify Him.



Welcome, Lord Jesus Christ, into our flesh,
into the heart of humanness.
I welcome Your godly holiness upon earth.
I welcome Your complete humanness upon my life world.
I welcome You, Yourself, into my life and self.
I thank You that I may embrace humanity
and find myself embracing You.
For You remain in our flesh now and forever,
among humankind whose eyes reflect Your eyes,
whose use of words matches Your use of words,
whose need of You matches Your willing need for us.
--Joe Tellow, SJ

Practicing What Your Preach ... To increase your love of Jesus before his birth, visit the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishop's website on pro-life issues at <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/>. Make a commitment to pray for an increased respect for all human life.

