

CELEBRATING the FEAST of the ANNUNCIATION

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. Luke 1: 30-32



With the Annunciation to the holy Mother of God, the Incarnation of Christ, the economy of God ever purposed and eternally intentioned, took place in the human, created order. The event, for which all humanity had longed, came to be in the womb of a human woman in response to her faithful submission. The mystery of salvation is begun. The life of God in man begins to take form. Humanity, in the person of Mary, can now truthfully be called its mother, begins anew its ascent into heaven.



Let us pause and remember that we are continually in the holy presence of God, the Creator of heaven and earth; the Redeemer of humankind, and the Holy Spirit Who constantly invites us to life and to holiness.



Today is revealed the mystery that is from all eternity. The Son of God becomes the Son of man, that, sharing in what is worse, He may make me share in what is better. In times of old, Adam was once deceived: he sought to become God, but received not his desire. Now God becomes man that He may make Adam like God. Let creation rejoice, let nature exult: for the Archangel stands in fear before the Virgin and, saying to her 'Hail', he brings the joyful greeting whereby our sorrow is assuaged. O You, Who in Your merciful compassion were made man, our God, glory to You!

Chrysostom in the fourth century speaking directly to the Mother of God, says: Rejoice, therefore, and dance for joy; rejoice, and tread upon the serpent's head. Rejoice, full of grace. For the curse has come to an end; corruption is taken away; sadness has passed; happiness is flowering; the blessing ever foretold by the prophets of old has come to pass. You are the one to whom the Holy Spirit referred, speaking through the mouth of Isaiah: 'Behold, the Virgin shall conceive in her womb and bear a son' (Isaiah 7.14). You are that virgin. Rejoice, therefore, O full of grace. You are pleasing to God; you are pleasing to the Maker; you are pleasing to the Creator; you are pleasing to Him who delights in the beauty of souls. You have found a Spouse who will protect your virginity instead of corrupting it; you have found a Spouse who wants to become your Son because of His great love for men. The Lord is with you! He who is everywhere is in you; He is with you, and He comes from you, the Lord in heaven, the Most High in the abyss, the Creator of all, Creator above the cherubim, Charioteer above the seraphim, Son in the womb of the Father, Only-begotten in your womb, the Lord--He knows how--entirely everywhere and entirely in you. Blessed are you among women!

LUKE 1: 26-38

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of David His father, and He will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "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, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

LITANY of MARY

Response after each invocation: Holy Mother of God, pray for us.

Hail, O you, through whom Joy will shine forth!

Hail, O you, through whom the curse will disappear!

Hail, O Restoration of the Fallen Adam!

Hail, O Redemption of the Tears of Eve!

Hail, O Peak above the reach of human thought!

Hail, O Depth even beyond the sight of angels!

Hail, O you who have become a Kingly Throne!

Hail, O you who carry Him Who Carries All!

Hail, O Star who manifests the Sun!

Hail, O Womb of the Divine Incarnation!

Hail, O you through whom creation is renewed!

Hail, O you through whom the Creator becomes a babe!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever pure!

Hail, O Space of the Spaceless God!

Hail, O you who brought forth Christ the Lord, Lover of humankind!

Hail, O Treasury of God's Providence!

Akathist Hymn – Eastern Catholic Devotion

O Mother worthy of all praise, you who have given birth to the Word, the Holiest of the Holy, accept this present offering, deliver all people from every affliction, and save from the future punishment those who cry out to you: "Alleluia!"

INTERCESSIONS

Mary is blessed among women with the joy all ages have awaited;

Through her intercession free all women who are in bondage and who lead lives less than human.

Mary rejoiced at the mystery of her motherhood;

Grant Your grace and guidance to mothers who do not want their children.

Mary's "yes" brings salvation to the world;

Let all of our choices promote life and give You praise and glory, O Lord.

Mary heard the Word of God and entered the mystery of redemption;

Give us the grace to follow the lure of Your call to growth.

Mary chose freely to become the mother of the Savior;

Grant to all people the freedom to choose their way of life.

Mary's loving motherhood is a refuge and strength to all;

Bless all parents who bear deep suffering in their children.

READING

It seems that the moment of breakthrough for Mary was also the beginning of a breakthrough of salvation for all creation...a moment came at which a unique demand was made of her. Her response was so self-giving and so total. From that time on, her being, her very body, was the Being of the One to Whom she had assented.

Roemary Haughton, The Passionate God.

THE ANGELUS

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.
Hail Mary, ...

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
Be it done unto me according to your word.
Hail Mary, ...

And the Word was made Flesh.
And dwelt among us.
Hail Mary, ...

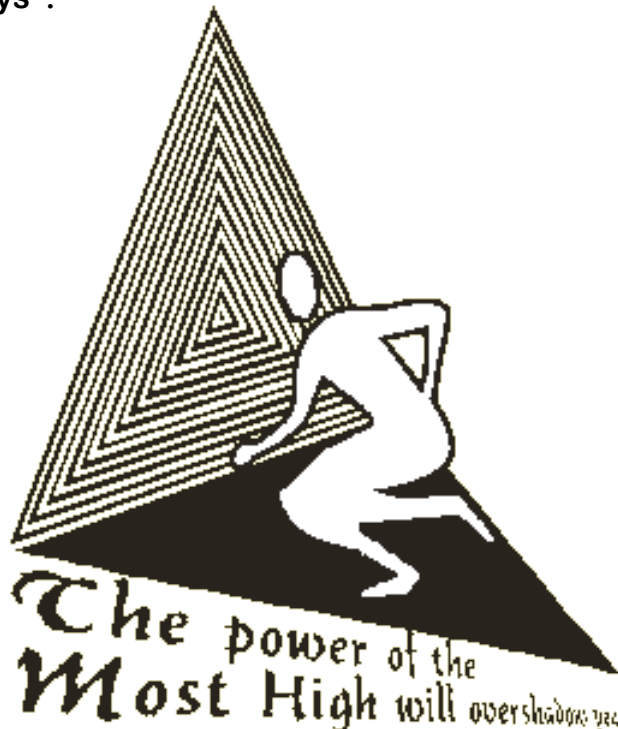
Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY

Pour forth, we beseech You, O Lord, Your grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ Your Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ Our Lord.
Amen.

The *Angelus Domini* is the traditional form used by the faithful to commemorate the holy annunciation of the angel Gabriel to Mary. It is used three times daily: at dawn, mid-day and at dusk. It is a recollection of the salvific event in which the Word became flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary, through the power of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the plan of the Father.

The devotion derives its name from the first word of the three versicles, *Angelus Domini nuntiavit Mariæ* (The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary). The origins of the Angelus are somewhat obscure, but it seems clear they are rooted in monastic prayers of the hours, and even in its earliest form included the three "Hail Marys".



REFLECTION

At the Annunciation, Mary conceived the Son of God in the physical reality of His body and blood, thus anticipating within herself what to some degree happens sacramentally in every believer who receives, under the signs of bread and wine, the Lord's body and blood. As a result, there is a profound analogy between the "Fiat", which Mary said in reply to the angel, and the "Amen", which every believer says when receiving the body of the Lord. Mary was asked to believe that the One whom she conceived "through the Holy Spirit" was "the Son of God" (Luke 1:30-35). In continuity with the Virgin's faith, in the Eucharistic mystery we are asked to believe that the same Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, becomes present in His full humanity and divinity under the signs of bread and wine. Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 2003 #55

HYMN

The Angel Gabriel from heaven came,
With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame;
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady," Gloria!

"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honor thee;
Thy son shall be Emanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favored lady," Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name,"
Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
"Most highly favored lady," Gloria!
Basque carol



O Mary, you are the joy of our race and the honor of the people,
intercede with Your Son on our behalf.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to always be open to the Lord.

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!