

20. December 2019

## “Different Aspects of the annunciation of Mary”

*Lk 1, 26- 38*

*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favour! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Look! You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?' The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. And I tell you this too: your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' Mary said, 'You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said.' And the angel left her.*

Again and again we hear these passages of the Holy Scriptures at the times set for them, and again and again we hear the word from the heavenly world when it says to us: “*Do not be afraid!*”

Mary also was frightened when she heard the address: “*Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favour! The Lord is with you.*”

It must be a special form of fright, but neither the fear of God nor the reverence that is somewhat similar to it: it is probably the inner shaking of God's strong closeness, which - if we are unprepared - can strike in the innermost so that the angel dampens this inner shaking with his words!

The message which Mary receives is indeed overwhelming, because in a few words the angel speaks about the way of salvation of God, in which she is now integrated in a special way.

But then comes the joy, as we will see later, when Mary visits her relative Elisabeth and in the *Magnificat* her joy unfolds in praise of God (*cf. Lk 1,46-55*)!

Perhaps we also know the space of special closeness to God - which is not limited to an apparition - which is so strong that our soul is first shaken and only when this shaking subsides does it show a joy.

However, it must also be possible to create the appropriate spaces, for example in the liturgy in a church, which can be a deeply shattering experience that leaves in the soul a great closeness to God and spiritual joy! Unfortunately, this dimension is less and less understood in the liturgy or in silence, for example, so that this form of inner shattering as well as the following spiritual joy becomes less and less perceptible!

The message itself which the Virgin receives is well known to us, for we often repeat it in the prayer of the Rosary. It is true that in this prayer the mysteries of salvation are to be given special consideration, and they are then more deeply engraved in our souls. But the repetition of the angel's greeting itself is also valuable, because it is the Word of God, through which the angel meditates, which repeatedly presents us with God's intentions for humanity and reminds us of Mary's Yes, which she spoke to God's will. The Hail Mary can also be practiced as a prayer of the heart, as it is the case, for example, in the Orthodoxy. There they practice the so-called Jesus Prayer and repeat it frequently. For some it is so internalized that the Holy Spirit begins to pray this prayer in them. The same can happen with the Hail Mary; the words form themselves in the heart and an intimate relationship with the Blessed Mother is the fruit.

Finally, let us look at the Blessed Mother's faith as she makes herself fully available, trusting in God, thus creating the human conditions for God's plan to be fulfilled.

*"Nothing is impossible to God"* the angel lets Mary know with reference to Elizabeth, who was considered barren and yet still had a child!

This should strengthen our faith that even in situations which seem hopeless on the human level; God can integrate everything into his plan.

A virgin birth is such an unusual process that we can only understand it in faith, as well as the presence of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist and the many experiences that we only grasp in the supernatural light.

They all, as well as the coming of the angel to the Virgin Mary, proclaim to us God's closeness and His loving care for us all! In these days, God's closeness becomes even more tangible when we celebrate the birth of the Son of God, and let us keep in our

hearts that the Yes of the Virgin is also our Yes to God's will and that we are called to cooperate in God's plan for humanity!