

8. March 2024

Solemnity of the Annunciation
“A great love story”

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 favor! 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.

What a great miracle in the midst of the simplicity of God's action!

The Angel Gabriel, faithful servant of the Most High, announces to Our Lady the decisive message for the destiny of humanity. The Lord chose her to bring into the world the One who would offer mankind God's mercy and, with it, salvation. No one could ever have imagined how God would redeem His humanity; only the Scriptures which He Himself had inspired announced that a Messiah would come....

The holy Archangel tells Mary that it is she who, of all women, has been called by God to be the Mother of His Son, who *"he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever"*.

But how is this to happen, being so that the Virgin knows no man?

It is not a suspicious question; rather, she seeks to know how God will perform this miracle. It is a question of faith: What is the way God has chosen? It is in this attitude that Our Lady, whose heart belongs to the Lord, asks.

And the answer again fills us with wonder: The Spirit will descend upon the Virgin and the power of the Most High will overshadow her. This direct co-operation between God and Mary opens the way for the Son of the Most High to come into this world as man.

We will never exhaust the depth of this mystery! Is it any wonder, then, that this message, so decisive for mankind, is repeated countless times in the recitation of the Holy Rosary, linked to the mysteries of salvation? The wonder never ceases! And Our Lady - whom all generations and nations now call "blessed" (Lk 1:48b) - loves this prayer, as she has made clear in several apparitions. Yes, she loves this prayer because it proclaims the infinite compassion of God, in whose designs she herself is so wonderfully and deeply involved. Her greatest desire is to proclaim the glory of God: *"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour; because he has looked upon the humiliation of his servant"* (Lk 1:46-48a).

How simple is also Mary's response to the unheard-of message entrusted to her: *"You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said"* (Lk 1:38). These words say it all, also about the Blessed Virgin.

God's plan of salvation for us human beings is realised with Mary's consent. "God, who created you without you, will not save you without you", says St. Augustine (Sermo ad Populum 169, 11, 13).

With her simple FIAT, the doors are opened for the coming of the Saviour. A simple "yes" from the person is needed for God's Will to be fulfilled. Our Lady's "yes", coming from a heart full of love for the Lord, shows all the nobility of her soul. She is the Beloved of God and the one who responded unreservedly to this love.

This is the great love story between our Heavenly Father and mankind. In the Virgin Mary, this love story found its full and unlimited fulfilment. She, the Daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son and the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, invites us to enter into her Immaculate Heart, overflowing with God's love, in order to receive there all that God has in store for mankind. This invitation is addressed to all men, whose mother she became at the foot of the Cross (Jn 19:27). And when people are converted and find refuge in her Heart, God will grant the peace that only He can give (cf. Jn 14:27).

NOTE: On the occasion of today's Solemnity, we would like to share with you this beautiful video about this day; "the beginning of our Salvation":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMKGcxG3CeA>