



The Annunciation

Mary's "yes"

Introduction

- 4** *Abraham, Moses and so many others listened to God's voice and did what He asked.*
- 5** *Through them, God spoke to His people, accompanied them, saved them and gave them the 10 laws of love.*
- 6** *But now God wants to speak directly to mankind, through His Son.*
- 7** *Jesus, the Son of God, will be part of the people that began with Abraham: the people of Israel.*
- 8** *These people are again in a situation of suffering. They are not free, they have to obey the Romans who have colonised them. But they continue to trust in God and wait for a liberator who can save them, a powerful king who will make himself heard!*
- 9** *But God has another plan: He wants to teach people that true law is not strength or power, but love. The true King will be very different from the one everyone is waiting for.*
- 10** *Once again God needs someone to help Him, to listen to His voice, a special person, so "beautiful" that she can become the mother of His Son here on earth. This person will be Mary.*
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11 A very beautiful story – The Bible

12 The Annunciation (Cf. Lk 1, 26-38)

13 We are in Nazareth, a small town in Galilee. A young girl named Mary lives here, who is engaged to a man named Joseph.

14 God sends the angel Gabriel to her who, as soon as he enters her small room, says to her: "Greetings to you, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you".

15 Mary is surprised: what does this greeting mean?

16 But the angel continues: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. God has thought of you. You will have a son, and you will call him Jesus. He will be great

and will be called the Son of the Most High. God will make him King, and His Kingdom will have no end".

17 Mary then asked the angel, "How can this happen? I have no husband..."

18 The angel replied, "Your cousin Elizabeth is also expecting a child, although she is very old. Nothing is impossible for God".

19 Mary believes everything the angel tells her: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be as you have said". The angel departed from her.

20 **Visit to St. Elizabeth** (Cf. Lk 1, 39-56)

21 Mary then immediately set out for a mountainous area, where her cousin Elizabeth lived with her husband Zachariah.

As soon as Mary entered the house, Elizabeth went to meet her and said, full of joy: "God has blessed you among all women, and blessed is the child you are going to have! Why does the mother of my Lord come to visit me? Blessed are you who believed the words of the Lord".

22 Then Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, for in my humility he has chosen me... The Almighty has done great things for me, and His name is holy. From generation to generation He extends His mercy on those who love Him: He has scattered the proud and raised up the humble; He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed; He has helped Israel... as He promised our fathers, Abraham and his descendants".

23 Mary stays with Elizabeth for about three months, then returns to her home.

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24 **A very beautiful story – The Bible**

25 *Like Abraham, Mary also says yes to God. Mary receives news that has changed the whole world.*

26 *When we say 'yes' to God and follow what He asks us to do, good things can happen not only for us, but also for others.*

27 *Mary's 'yes' allowed God to give us a great gift (1).*

28 **Let us live like this**

29 *"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me as you have said" (Cf. Lk 1:38).*

30 "Let us always say yes to God like Mary!" Chiara (C.Lubich, in Gen4 n. 5 May 1981, p.7)

31 ... and her mother smiles at her

Naiga, lives in Africa, in a small village in the middle of the forest. It is 6 o'clock in the morning.

32 Naiga has just woken up: she opens the window and sees her mother going to the market. She lets out a long yawn and then closes her eyes and says: "Jesus, I want to make you happy today".

33 She washes, dresses and runs to Peter, her little brother, but Peter is still asleep.

34 As she goes into the kitchen to have breakfast, she sees the broom in the corner.

35 I could sweep the kitchen floor , " Naiga thinks, "so that Mum doesn't have to when she comes home.

36 As she is sweeping the floor , Mum comes in with her shopping. She smiles and gives her a banana, which Naiga likes very much.

37 Let us live like this

38 "*Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me as you have said*" (Cf. Lk 1:38).

39 "Let us always say yes to God like Mary!" -Chiara (C.Lubich, in Gen4 n. 5 May 1981, p.7)

40 I said yes!

Philip woke up today with a bit of a toothache. He gets up and goes to the kitchen. Mum is preparing breakfast. Philip says to her, "Mum, I can't go to kindergarten today, my tooth hurts!".

41 "Let me see," says Mum. She looks at it and says: "It's not very serious. I'll phone the dentist today to ask when we can have an appointment".

42 Then she takes a tablet from the medicine cabinet and gives it to Philip: "You'll see that the pain will pass immediately! Come on, get ready for kindergarten!".

43 But Philip didn't want to go that morning: "No! I don't want to go, I want to stay home!" His mother became serious.

44 Philip thought, "OK, I'll go. That way I'll make mother happy!" and he goes into the bathroom to wash himself.

45 He gets dressed, eats breakfast and runs off to kindergarten. Philip feels happy because he has said "Yes" and has seen his mother happy.

46 As soon as he gets to school, his tooth doesn't hurt anymore and he runs off to play with all the other children.

47 Gen4 Center

Notes

1- *"Mary can be seen as an example of someone with faith in that she accepted the angel's word and was faithful to her son to the end". (Original text: "Marie peut être considérée comme un exemple de foi en ce qu'elle a accueilli la parole de l'ange et qu'elle a été fidèle à son fils jusqu'au bout." - Translated from the book by Nouis, Antoine. Un catéchisme protestant, Lyon: Olivétan; Lausanne: OPEC, 2010, p 113).*

- *Some insights from the richness of the theology of the **Eastern Orthodox Churches**, edited by Sherin H. Salama: "Saint John Chrysostom expresses the greatness of the birth of the Son of God and what it means for humanity, saying: "If the Son of God has become the son of David, do not doubt, O son of Adam, that you are becoming a son of God.(...) He was born in the flesh, so that you may be born again according to the Spirit. He was born of a woman, so that you may become a son of God."*

Father Tadros Yacoub, a contemporary father of the Coptic Orthodox Church, explains what the Word does within us, emphasising that it moves us to action. Like Mary, who, when she rejoiced in the Word within her, she could not help but leave "quickly towards the mountains to the city of Judah", to meet her relative Elizabeth: "a vivid image of the Church that bears the Bridegroom, who will not rest, but will set out from generation to generation (...) to present her Bridegroom to every soul in the world. If we carry Christ within us, ... we will open our hearts with love towards all, ardently desiring to serve all"! "We desire (as did the Virgin Mary when she visited Elizabeth) that in our visits or encounters with others, we bring them our Holy Christ, who gives joy to their souls and sets alight His Holy Spirit in them."

And Origen comments, "We bless Mary down through the centuries, not as a virgin who lived and then died, but as a virgin who manifested in her life the supreme saving work of God. Every believer looks to her and sees in her the supreme grace of God granted to humanity. If the Virgin enjoyed motherhood for the Lord Christ as she bore him incarnate in her womb, just as she bore him by faith in her heart, then the soul that enjoys communion with God also enjoys a kind of motherhood, as Father Methodius says: "The Church is in a state of childbirth until Christ is formed and born within us. Every saint enjoys communion with Christ, as if Christ were born again in him/her".

And St Ambrose: "Make sure you do the will of the Father, to be a mother of Christ".

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