

## **THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD (solemnity)**

**Isaiah 7:10-14, 8:10      Psalm 39:7-11      Hebrews 10:4-10      Luke 1:26-38**

Most preachers, preaching on the Gospel of the Annunciation usually focused on one thing. They focused on the fact that Mary was obedient. That is – she listened to what the angel said, and she said “yes” to what God wanted. She was obedient.

And that is a very good thing. It’s always good to listen to God’s word and to say ‘yes’ to God’s plan.

But today I want to focus on two other parts of this Gospel scene, and it is this: I want to focus on Mary’s courage and on her faith.

It took great courage for Mary to talk to the angel and strong faith to say ‘yes’ to what God was asking of her.

When the angel appeared to Mary, she was probably a teenager. She was rather young.

It took courage and amazing faith for Mary to say ‘yes’ – “yes, I will be the mother of God’s Son. Yes, my life is in God’s hands. Yes, I will love this boy named Jesus, and support him throughout his life – even when things become difficult when he grows up. Even when he is on the cross.”

Saying ‘yes’ meant that she would face struggles. She would have difficulties. Maybe she would be sad at times, and heartbroken.

But throughout her life, Mary kept saying ‘yes’ to God. And as we read about Mary’s whole life, we see that she discovers, deep within herself, an amazing amount of courage and faith.

It happened to Mary. And it can happen to us.

Right now, we may not be so sure of how much courage and faith we have. Whenever our ordinary routine, our daily schedule, gets changed, it feels a little strange, doesn’t it?

It is a year now since the pandemic and life has not been easy for everyone, and this can make some people feel anxious or worried.

The challenging experience that we have gone through this past year during this pandemic, I think we too have discovered that God has given us a wonderful gift of faith and courage.

The Virgin Mary faced some difficult moments in her life. But she kept listening to God and doing her best to stay faithful to Jesus. She discovered, over and over again, that God had given her an amazing gift of faith and courage.

Jesus is with us at every moment. The Holy Spirit is guiding us. The love of God is surrounding us and our whole family.

And while you may not actually see the Archangel Gabriel today or tomorrow, I know that his message is still meant for every one of us. His message is the same message he spoke to the Virgin Mary. What did he say? He said: "Do not be afraid."

We don't need to be afraid. God has given us faith! Don't be afraid, the Lord is with you.

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

**Lord God, grant that we, your servants, may rejoice in unfailing health of mind and body, and through the intercession of Blessed Mary ever-Virgin, may we be set free from present sorrow and come to enjoy eternal happiness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen**

**Fr Patrick**