Weekdays of Advent: December 20th

Gospel text (*Lk* 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..." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word..."

The Annunciation

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(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, we consider a decisive moment in human history: Mary offers herself, body and soul, as home to God. In Her and from Her, the son of God took the body. Through her, the word became body and Mary becomes "a living haven" of the Word. The desire of all cultures —God dwells among us— here it becomes a reality.

Devoutly listening with the heart: this is the proper attitude of the Holy Mary. On the symbolic icon of the Annunciation we see the Virgin receiving the heavenly Messenger while meditating on the Scriptures. Mary is the docile servant of the holy Word. There were reasons to be afraid, because carrying the weight of the world, being the mother of the King of the universe was stronger than any forces of a human being. That is why the Archangel repeated to her "Don't be afraid"; so typical of the Scriptures.

—Holy Mary answers "yes" and incorporates all her existence to the will of God, opening the door of the world to God.

Mary ponders the "Word" and becomes Mother of God through her "Yes" to the divine will

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Today, we admire Mary’s response to the angel. Initially, with the angel’s greeting, Mary suffers embarrassment - as happened to Zechariah, but she ponders and inwardly confronts herself with the word. She does not hesitate at the uneasiness of the closeness of God, but she tries to understand. It is the image of the Church mulling over God’s Word to fully understand it while keeping the gift in its memory.

Then, unlike Zechariah’s reaction, Mary does not doubt: she does not question the "what", but "how" the promise can be fulfilled, this being inconceivable to her. The angel confirms to her that it will be by the power of the Holy Spirit. Maria, finally, responds simply "Yes", by declaring herself the handmaid of the Lord.

—In creating freedom, God made Himself in a certain sense dependent upon man: His power is tied to the unenforceable “yes” of a human being. Mary becomes Mother through her "Yes": "Let it be done to me as you have said.”