

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. He was sent to a young virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the family of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, «Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you».

Mary was troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean. But the angel said, «Do not fear, Mary, for God has looked kindly on you. You shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call him Jesus. He will be great and shall rightly be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the kingdom of David, his ancestor; he will rule over the people of Jacob forever and his reign shall have no end».

Then Mary said to the angel, «How can this be if I am a virgin?». And the angel said to her, «The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the holy child to be born shall be called Son of God. Even your relative Elizabeth is expecting a son in her old age, although she was unable to have a child, and she is now in her sixth month. With God nothing is impossible». Then Mary said, «I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said». And the angel left her.

«I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said»

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Today, once more, we contemplate the impressive scene of the Annunciation. God,

always true to his promises, lets Mary know, through the Angel Gabriel that she is the one chosen to bear the Savior of the world. As we learn to expect from the Lord, the most important event in the history of mankind —the Creator and Lord of all things becoming man, just like us— takes place in a very simple way: a young woman in a small village in Galilea. No fireworks.

The way of going about it is simple; the event is magnificent as are the virtues of the Virgin Mary: filled with grace, the Lord is with her, humble, simple, available for God's will, generous. God has plans for her, as he has for you and for me, but He relies on our free and loving cooperation to carry them out. Mary is our example: «I am the hand-maid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word» (Lk 1:38). It is not only a “yes” to the message of the Angel; it is turning herself into the hands of God the Father, to abandon herself to his intimate providence, to let God work through her now and in all the circumstances of Her life.

Of Mary's answer to God's will, as of ours,—Saint Josemaría Escriva— writes, «never forget it, a great deal depends on it».

We are preparing to celebrate Christmas. The best way to do so is to be with Mary, contemplating Her life and trying to imitate Her virtues in order to receive the Lord with the right heart: What does God expect from me, now, today, at work, with this person I deal with all the time, from my relation with Him? A great deal depends on our response to the little things of every day!