



HOMILY FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION – YEAR C

My brothers and sisters in Christ, on this beautiful Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, we hear in this familiar Gospel, the Virgin Mary's response to the Archangel Gabriel, "*behold, I am the Handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.*" Mary said yes to the Mystery of the Word of God

becoming man for our salvation. The Eternal Son of God taking on human flesh in Mary's pure womb. The Virgin Mary said yes on behalf of the human race to cooperate with God's plan of eternal salvation thru Jesus Christ. For a moment, let us recall Original Sin, as Adam & Eve were tempted by the devil and in reality allowed the devil to sow the seeds of doubt and mistrust of God's goodness in their hearts (Cf. *Gen 3:1-6*). Only God Himself could pay the price the human race owed the Father for our redemption. What a high price the Son of God paid for us and it all began with the Immaculate Conception of Mary in the womb of St. Anne and continues with the Word becoming flesh for us, which is what we are celebrating today.

In his catechesis *Men Women He Created Them - A Theology of the Body*, Pope Saint John Paul II sees that in *Genesis 3:1-5* (the temptation and sin of Adam and Eve) that the tempter's motive was to get them to question "*the gift and the love from which creation has its origin as donation.*" ...It is enough to read carefully the whole passage of *Genesis 3:1-5*, to detect in it the Mystery of Man, who he originally was and why he turns his back on the Father (even if we do not find this name applied to God in the narrative). Questioning in his heart the deepest meaning of the donation/gift, that is, love, as the specific motive of the Creation and of the original covenant (cf. *Gn 3:5*), man turns his back on God and the unconditional love the Father had for him. Before God casted him out of the Garden of Eden, man casts God out of his heart. (*TOB 26:4*) The Virgin Mary (referred to as the New Eve by some of the Fathers of the Church), never turns her back on the Father, for she is so deeply aware that everything is a gift from God and that she is deeply loved by Him and prepared to make of complete gift of herself back to Him. This empowers her to make a complete donation/gift of herself to God's plan of salvation, giving her free consent to the mystery of the "Word becoming Flesh" in Her Immaculate womb. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states:

At the announcement that she would give birth to "the Son of the Most High" without knowing man, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary responded with the obedience of faith, certain that "with God nothing will be impossible": "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word." Thus, giving her consent to God's word, Mary becomes the mother of Jesus. Espousing the divine will for salvation wholeheartedly, without a single sin to restrain her, she gave herself entirely to the person and to the work of her Son; she did so in order to serve the mystery of redemption with him and dependent on him, by God's grace. (CCC 494)

Indeed Mary's attitude is "*to do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is within my heart!*" (From today's *Responsorial Psalm*) which empowered her to **espouse** "the Divine Will for salvation wholeheartedly" and give 'herself entirely,' body, heart and soul to God's will for her. Even when Mary questions the angel, "*how can this be, since I have no relations with a man?*" It is not a question of doubt, but rather questioning so she may more deeply understand what God is asking of her in order to give her full, free assent of mind and heart to whatever God desires of her, trusting that God will accomplish it, for she believes, "*nothing is impossible for God.*" Later Elizabeth would proclaim, "*Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.*" (*Lk 1:45, NAB*) Mary's gift of self is not just for one day, but everyday. This is a model for all of us today. For married people who have an earthly spouse, your "yes" to each other was not just for the wedding day, but until death do you part. For those of us called to "Celibacy

for the Kingdom,” we don’t just say “yes” on the day of our ordination or religious consecration, but every day until God calls us home to Himself.

My brothers in sisters in Christ, the more we realize the extreme love and generosity of God and His desire for us to share in eternal communion with Him, begun now on earth through the life of grace, the more we can become like Mary in giving ourselves “entirely to the Person and to the work of her Son.” How this will individually unfold depends on our personal vocational calling. But, all are called to be in intimate relationship with the Blessed Trinity by saying “yes” every day to Him and His will for us. Our Lord Jesus Christ, freely assenting to whatever is asked of us “*Behold, I am the (servant) of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.*” Believing that “*nothing is impossible for God*” and His Divine grace and mercy.

So as we continue our celebration of the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, preparing for the mystery of the Holy Eucharist, The Word being made flesh on our altar, so He may then live in us, may Mother Mary, the New Eve and our tender Mother of Mercy help us to believe “nothing is impossible for God.” May she assist us in our everyday lives to give, our “yes” to God with body, soul and heart proclaiming “*To do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is within my heart!*” God bless you always. Amen.



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