

SUNDAY GOSPEL BIBLE SHARING



Wednesday Dec 20th, for the 3rd Sunday in Advent

OPENING PRAYER: Hail Mary

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL

- In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”
- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

Luke 1:26-38

Announcement of the Birth of Jesus.†

26 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,

27 to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary.¹

28 And coming to her, he said, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.”^m

29 But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

30 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

31ⁿ Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.

32^o He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,^{*} and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,

33 and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”^p

34 But Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?”^q

35 And the angel said to her in reply, “The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”^g

36 And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived* a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;

37 for nothing will be impossible for God.”^t

38 Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Notes

* [1:26–38] The announcement to Mary of the birth of Jesus is parallel to the announcement to Zechariah of the birth of John. In both the angel Gabriel appears to the parent who is troubled by the vision ([Lk 1:11–12](#), [26–29](#)) and then told by the angel not to fear ([Lk 1:13](#), [30](#)). After the announcement is made ([Lk 1:14–17](#), [31–33](#)) the parent objects ([Lk 1:18](#), [34](#)) and a sign is given to confirm the announcement ([Lk 1:20](#), [36](#)). The particular focus of the announcement of the birth of Jesus is on his identity as Son of David ([Lk 1:32–33](#)) and Son of God ([Lk 1:32](#), [35](#)).

* [1:32] Son of the Most High: cf. [Lk 1:76](#) where John is described as “prophet of the Most High.” “Most High” is a title for God commonly used by Luke ([Lk 1:35](#), [76](#); [6:35](#); [8:28](#); [Acts 7:48](#); [16:17](#)).

* [1:34] Mary’s questioning response is a denial of sexual relations and is used by Luke to lead to the angel’s declaration about the Spirit’s role in the conception of this child ([Lk 1:35](#)). According to Luke, the virginal conception of Jesus takes place through the holy Spirit, the power of God, and therefore Jesus has a unique relationship to Yahweh: he is Son of God.

* [1:36–37] The sign given to Mary in confirmation of the angel’s announcement to her is the pregnancy of her aged relative Elizabeth. If a woman past the childbearing age could become pregnant, why, the angel implies, should there be doubt about Mary’s pregnancy, for nothing will be impossible for God.

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

How do you respond to the Gospel passage?

How is God showing his favor to you?

What do you need to stop being afraid of?

What miracle is God ready to work in you, that seems impossible?

Are you willing, like Mary was, to let God do anything with your life that he wants to? Can you let God take control of you, and be with you, even when things are really confusing and scary?

Commentary

The angel Gabriel doesn't show up much in the Bible. We see Gabriel here in the first chapter of Luke, appearing first to Zechariah, who will become the father of John the Baptist, and then to Mary. Other than these two encounters, the only mention of Gabriel is when the angel appears to Daniel in a vision (Daniel 8:15-16, 9:21). This is an angel whose rare appearances always carry important news from God. So, when Gabriel shows up, it's a pretty good idea to pay attention.

In this short conversation with Mary, Gabriel tells her that she is about to become the mother of the Son of God.

First, the Angel tells Mary "*Hail favored one.*" Mary's *humanness* made her the best possible mother for one who would be completely human, and completely God. What mattered was her willingness to respond to God's favor with obedience.

In the same breath with this announcement that God favors Mary, Gabriel tells her that *the Lord is with her*. He is about to tell her that she will bear a son, who will be called "God with Us, Emmanuel." But God is *already* with Mary, and Gabriel wants to be sure she knows that this is true.

Which brings us to the next important thing Gabriel tells Mary: "*Do not be afraid.*"

Luke says that Mary "was greatly troubled" (Lk 1:29) No wonder the angel told Mary, "Don't be afraid." Put yourself in her sandals for a minute. Here's this angel from God standing beside you, telling you that God values you, and that something God is going to do in you will change the whole

world forever. Wouldn't you be a little bit afraid? But the angel said, "don't be afraid."

God says the same thing to us whenever we face what we don't know. When we are waiting for the tests to come back so the doctor will give a diagnosis, or when there is uncertainty about employment or having enough resources to put food on the table and clothes on our backs, God says, 'stop being afraid.' When we are afraid of failing, or of hurting someone, or of being hurt, God says it again. God's got this. You can trust him.

Mary asks, "How *can this be?*" Mary trusted God to do what he said he would do. She didn't need proof, as Zechariah did. She trusted that everything the angel had said was true. She just wondered how it was going to happen.

"Nothing is impossible with God." If God could make an old woman pregnant, he can do anything. We don't always need to know the details.

How often do we second-guess God, like Zechariah? How often do we need to see some proof before we are willing to commit our lives to following the path God has set in front of us? How often do we get bogged down in the details that really aren't important?

God calls us to trust him completely, just as Mary did. "May it be done to me according to your word," she said to the angel. Mary's response was an act of humble obedience. God had a plan to save the world through his Son, Jesus.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Room 5 and Zoom
Wednesday, Dec 20 6:30 – 7:30pm
Weekly on Wednesday
Zoom Meeting

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting

Time: Dec 20, 2023 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZIkD-qgrj8qG9Rt4LoXWaku9w9Mo6AzLDCs/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGupzspEtSRsBiHRpwAHYigb_zziClfjfpviEvJDBhkYwjjb_UbH7opMcL8

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86903804010?pwd=MGJydS9qSW9LSzNGblZSM2xZcWpGZz09>

Meeting ID: 869 0380 4010

Passcode: 086586

One tap mobile

+13017158592,