



The Annunciation of the Lord

March 25

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Marian Feast Day

There was a young Jewish virgin named Mary who lived in a little town in Galilee called Nazareth. Mary was betrothed to a good man named Joseph. Like Mary herself, Joseph was a descendant of King David, from whose house it was prophesied the Messiah would be born. Long ago, God had promised the Jewish people that the Messiah would be born from a virgin and save the people from their sins. The Jewish people were patiently waiting for God to keep this promise.

One day, the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary. He greeted her with the words, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." (Do you recognize these words? They are the words we use at the beginning of the Hail Mary prayer.) The angel's appearance was so strange and wondrous that Mary knew he was no earthly creature. She was frightened and troubled. She did not know why the angel had come to her and was greeting her this way. But the Angel Gabriel told her that she should not be afraid and that she would conceive in her womb a son, and He would be the Messiah that God had promised His people.

This Mary did not understand. Since she was unmarried, she did not know how she could have a son. The angel explained that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, and the power of the Most High God would overshadow her, so that the son she was to have would be the Son of God. He also told her that her cousin Elizabeth, who was too old to have children, would also give birth to a baby boy, because nothing was impossible for God.

Mary thought about the Angel Gabriel's words. She knew that if she agreed to what he had told her, her life would never be the same. After all, who would believe that the child she carried in her womb would be God's Son? Not only that, she knew the Messiah was destined to suffer, and if her son suffered, then she would suffer, too. But Mary loved God with her whole heart. The Angel Gabriel had called her full of grace because God had filled her soul so completely with His grace that she had never sinned. She desired more than anything else to show her love for God by doing His will. She said to the angel, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). With that the Angel Gabriel left her, and everything happened the way he told her it would. Hail Mary, help me to say "yes" to God's will!