



# MORNING PRAYER DEVOTIONAL

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2020

## THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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*Readings: Exodus 32; Luke 1:26-38; Psalms 113, 138*

On this day, we observe the Feast of the Annunciation, when the Angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will bear the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

I'd like for us to note three things in this text from Luke (above).

**First**, it came uninvited. Mary certainly had no plans to be pregnant; in fact, she had not had sexual relations with a man, so a child in her immediate future was nowhere in her mind. Gabriel's message was a shock.

**Second**, not only was the message shocking, it was also problematic. Think of the breach of trust between her and Joseph; the social condemnation that would befall her; the ruin – social, spiritual and economic – that would be hers as a result of this shameful stigma.

**Third**, note Mary's submission: "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (verse 38). Gaining some perspective from the angel's message, "... Nothing will be impossible with God," Mary finds herself swept up in something far greater than her personal concerns. No matter the inconvenience, no matter the social upheaval and shame, she was the Lord's servant, and His word would prevail.

We have all been visited by hardship from time to time. Almost always, that hardship has come uninvited. I have yet to meet someone who gets up in the morning and says, "I am looking forward to a really terrible day today!" But life visits us with daunting challenges: problems inevitably

come, disappointments visit us, and dispiriting episodes find their way into our lives, even when we think we have created a safe haven for ourselves and our loved ones.

While it is easy to make connections to the Coronavirus and the challenges we all face from it, I sense the need to recognize that we all entered into this difficult time with any number of burdens *already* on our shoulders. While we all share the burden of this pandemic, many of us are also fighting dragons and demons of other kinds: The stress and discord of family life may still be there, the financial stress has only become worse, the sense of emotional isolation and loneliness was with us long before COVID19 came knocking on our door. The crisis in which we all share will eventually end, but we will still be left with the burden of our own sin and brokenness.

This is where The Annunciation gives us hope. This is where our identity with Mary can encourage our faith. Whatever has visited us before these dark days descended upon us is not beyond the reach of our Heavenly Father: "Nothing is impossible with God." May we dwell on Gabriel's message; may we reflect on Mary's response. And may God grant us grace to trust in Him with all of our cares and burdens.

"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7).

-Fr. Marc



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***The Collect for the Feast of the Annunciation***  
*ACNA Prayer Book, page 627*

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord, that we who have known the incarnation of your Son Jesus Christ, announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary, may by his Cross and passion be brought to the glory of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.