

1. Read (Seek) — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate (Find) — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage.
God what are you saying to me through this?

3. Pray (Ask) — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate (Taste) — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

- [1] Fr. John Hardon, *Modern Catholic Dictionary*
- [2] Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)1015
- [3] Fr. Leonard Goffine's; *The Church's Year* pg. 582
- [4] Ibid.
- [5] Fr. John Hardon, *Basic Catholic Catechism Course*
- [6] St. Augustine, *Sermo* 169,11,13
- [7] CCC 489
- [8] From the Opening Prayer in this Link to Liturgy Packet
- [9] Redemptoris Mater 9.3

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Quick Connect

What is the Gospel saying? Luke 1:26-38 — Pg. 1

What is the Church saying Past and Present? Pages 1-3

What is God saying to you through this passage? Page 4

Gospel Reading – Luke 1:26-38 – Roman Missal

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. 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, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" 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. 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; for nothing will be impossible for God." 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.

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – March 25

From Pope Saint Leo the Great

Lowliness is assured by majesty, weakness by power, mortality by eternity. To pay the debt of our sinful state, a nature that was incapable of suffering was joined to one that could suffer. Thus, in keeping with the healing that we needed, one and the same mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ, was able to die in one nature, and unable to die in the other.

He who is true God was therefore born in the complete and perfect nature of a true man, whole in his own nature, whole in ours. By our nature we mean what the Creator had fashioned in us from the beginning, and took to himself in order to restore it.

The Annunciation – Lesson and Discussion

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God"

The Annunciation is a feast day that is linked to the Incarnation.

What is the Incarnation? The Incarnation is, "The union of the divine nature of the Son of God with human nature in the person of Jesus

Christ. The Son of God assumed our flesh, body, and soul, and dwelled among us like one of us in order to redeem us. His divine nature was substantially united to our human nature. Formerly the Feast of the Annunciation was called the Feast of the Incarnation.”[1]

What is the Annunciation? The word annunciation comes from the Latin “annuntiatio”, an announcing, or an announcement. In the case of The Annunciation it was the Angel Gabriel visiting Mary and announcing the Divine will of God to incarnate for the salvation of souls. It is also the announcement of Mary’s yes, “Let it be done unto me according to thy word.” (Luke 1:38)

What then, is the connection between the Incarnation and the Annunciation? This may best be understood by reading the words of St. John’s Gospel, “The Word became flesh” (John 1:14) The Annunciation is the proclamation, the “word” of God via the Angel Gabriel and the “word” or response of the Blessed Virgin Mary, her yes or fiat. Through God’s grace and Mary’s open response and cooperation to the Grace of God, the Incarnation occurs. God’s grace and Mary’s yes. It is through Mary, within her womb, that Jesus, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity assumes flesh, body, and soul. Mary’s “yes” at the Annunciation ushers in the Incarnation.

Why do we celebrate the feast of The Annunciation on March 25th? The celebration of the feast of The Annunciation on March 25th is nine months prior to the Nativity or birth of Christ, which is December 25th. The celebration of this feast dates back as early as the fifth century. December 25th is a few days after the Winter Solstice. It is in the darkest, coldest time of the year that Jesus, the “Light of the World”, enters into the world to bring light and warmth. March 25th is a few days after the Spring Equinox. It is in the springtime, when life is first budding and being formed that the Word begins to form and bud, slowly taking flesh within the womb of Mary.

Why is the feast of The Annunciation so important? The simple answer is that the Annunciation ushers in the Incarnation. God will be formed, knit in the womb of Mary, thus becoming the “fruit” of her womb. It is this flesh, the flesh formed within Mary, on which Salvation hinges. “The flesh is the hinge of salvation.’ We believe in God who is creator of the flesh; we believe in the Word made flesh in order to redeem the flesh; we believe in the resurrection of the flesh, the fulfillment of both the creation and the redemption of flesh.”[2] In one short phrase flesh is mentioned six times. The Annunciation is the beginning of the redemption of flesh; it is cause for all of us in the flesh to celebrate.

What does it mean by the “sixth month”? The sixth month was speaking of Mary’s cousin, Elizabeth, being in her sixth month of pregnancy with Saint John the Baptist.

Who is the Angel Gabriel? The Angel Gabriel is one of the Archangels and a messenger of God. He is one of only three angels mentioned by name in the Bible. He appeared to the prophet Daniel to explain his visions to the

coming Messiah (Daniel 8: 16-26; 9:21-27), he appeared to Zachary in the temple to announce the coming of his son, John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-20) and lastly, he appeared to Mary to announce to her that she was the one to be chosen among all women to bear the Saviour of the world. (Luke 1:26-38)

Why was the Angel Gabriel sent to Mary? “The Angel Gabriel was sent to Mary to announce to her that it was God’s will that His divine Son, in order to redeem the human race by His sufferings and death, should take human nature from her, and because the human race, redeemed by Christ, was to occupy the place made vacant by the fallen angels.”[3]

Did the Incarnation have to happen for our Salvation? Yes! Jesus, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who is Divine, could not suffer without taking on human flesh. He could not be ridiculed, humiliated and ultimately die, if He did not take on flesh. He must become flesh in order to redeem flesh. All of this happens through the mystery of the Incarnation. “This shows the enormity of sin, for which no man however pure, no, not even an angel, but only a God-Man could atone.”[4]

When was Jesus conceived in Mary’s womb? “At the very moment of her yes, the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, and the second person of the Holy Trinity took flesh.”[5] The Third Article of the Apostles Creed is “Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary”. This article shows the link between the Annunciation (conceived by the Holy Spirit) and the Incarnation (born of the Virgin Mary). The article also points to the cooperation between God (the Third Person of God, the Holy Spirit) and man (Mary, the New Eve, the fairest of the human race).

Why is the Annunciation considered a Marian Feast Day? In the providence of God, God willed that Mary’s “yes” would bring forth the Savior, Jesus Christ. “God created us without us: but he did not will to save us without us.”[6] Mary’s “yes” is the perfect example of how each of us is expected to cooperate with the Grace of God in our life to bring about the salvation of our own soul and the souls of others. “Throughout the Old Covenant and Old Testament, all the holy women had prepared the way for Mary beginning with Eve. Although Eve had sinned, God had promised her prosperity over the evil one. Sarah conceived a son in spite of her old age. (cf. Gn. 18:10-14; 21:1-2). Against all human expectation God chooses those who were considered powerless and weak to show forth his faithfulness to his promises: Hannah, the mother of Samuel; Deborah; Ruth; Judith and Esther; and many other women. (cf. 1 Cor. 1:17; 1 Sam. 1) After a long period of waiting, Mary, who saw herself as the lowliest, was raised as the greatest, the exalted Daughter of Sion, and the new plan of salvation is established.”[7] Today marks the climax of history. The promised fulfilled in the words of Isaiah, “The Virgin is with Child and shall bear a son, and she will call him Emmanuel”[8]. Emmanuel, God with us, is made into reality! Saint John Paul II wrote, “The Annunciation, therefore, is the revelation of the mystery of the Incarnation at the very beginning of its fulfillment on earth. As a result she is also the favorite daughter of the Father and the temple of the Holy Spirit.”[9]