



"The Annunciation" by Caravaggio, 1608 AD

Into the deep

ADULT FAITH FORMATION:
DEEPENING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH & IDENTITY

The Annunciation

25 March 2020

Excerpts from *The First Homily: On the Annunciation to the Holy Virgin Mary*. St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, 213 – 270 AD

"Today are strains of praise sung joyfully by the choir of angels, and the light of the advent of Christ shines brightly upon the faithful. Today is the glad springtime to us, and Christ the Sun of righteousness has beamed with clear light around us, and has illumined the minds of the faithful.

"Today is Adam made anew, and moves in the choir of angels having winged his way to heaven. Today is the whole circle of the earth filled with joy, since the sojourn of the Holy Spirit has been realized to men. Today the grace of God and the hope of the unseen shine through all wonders transcending imagination, and make the mystery that was kept hidden from eternity plainly discernible to us. Today are woven the chaplets of never-fading virtue.

"Today, God, willing to crown the sacred heads of those whose pleasure is to hearken to Him, and who delight in His festivals, invites the lovers of unswerving faith as His called and His heirs; and the heavenly kingdom is urgent to summon those who mind celestial things to join the divine service of the incorporeal choirs.

"Today is fulfilled the word of David, *"Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad. The fields shall be joyful, and all the trees of the wood before the Lord, because He comes."* David thus made mention of the trees; and the Lord's forerunner also spoke of them as trees *"that should bring forth fruits meet for repentance,"* or rather for the

coming of the Lord. But our Lord Jesus Christ promises perpetual gladness to all those who believe in Him. For He says, *"I will see you, and you shall rejoice; and your joy no man takes from you."* Today is the illustrious and ineffable mystery of Christians who have willingly set their hope like a seal upon Christ, plainly declared to us.

"Today did Gabriel, who stands by God, come to the pure virgin, bearing to her the glad annunciation, *"Hail, thou that art highly favoured! And she cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel immediately proceeded to say, The Lord is with you: fear not, Mary; for you have found favour with God. Behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name Jesus..."*

"He who fulfilled the whole administration of unutterable mysteries of the economy in heaven in the bosom of the Father, and in the cave in the arms of the mother, reposed in the manger. Angelic choirs encircled Him, singing of glory in heaven and of peace upon earth. In heaven He was seated at the right hand of the Father; and in the manger He rested, as it were, upon the cherubim. Even there was in truth His cherubic throne; there was His royal seat. Holy of the holy, and alone glorious upon the earth, and holier than the holy, was that wherein Christ our God rested. To Him be glory, honour, and power. Together with the Father undefiled, and the altogether holy and quickening Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of the ages. Amen."¹ Amen, indeed ~

¹ "The First Homily: On the Annunciation to the Holy Virgin Mary." Four Homilies, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus. Translated by S.D.F. Salmond. From Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 6. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Cox. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, 1886.) The web: www.newadvent.org/fathers/06091.htm.

The Popes of Saint Joseph

The Solemnity of St Joseph is March 19th

Did you know? *"The papal states had been tumbled; the fathers of the First Vatican Council forced home. Rome was occupied; the Pope commenced the long Vatican captivity... prospects appeared bleak for the papacy. In reality, things were not nearly so bad as they seemed. He who had preserved Christ himself from the designs of a wicked Herod still stood prepared to protect Christ's Vicar from the plots of a wicked world. When things appeared at their worst, Pope Pius IX acceded to the desires of the faithful and various members of the First Vatican Council, and invoked the powerful protection of the guardian of the nascent Church, Joseph of Nazareth..."¹*

December 8th, 1870, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, was a day of prayer for the faithful of Italy concerning the See of Peter. And the occupant at that time, Pius IX, implemented a profound act of his authority by issuing *Quemadmodum Deus* declaring St. Joseph patron and protector of the universal Church.² The Litany of St. Joseph was endorsed for public use by Pius X and Pius XII instituted a first class feast of St. Joseph the *Worker*. In 1961, Pope John XXIII issued *Le voci che da tutti* in which he called for the protection of St. Joseph as the Church prepared for the Second Vatican Council.

Ninety-two years after Pope Pius IX proclaimed Joseph to be the Church's

(continued other side)



Sunday, March 8th: Rite of Sending at the 10:30am Mass, Blessed Sacrament
 Sunday, March 8th: Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, 3:00pm service at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Please keep our RCIA catechumen and candidates, their families and their sponsors in your prayers as they continue their journey of entering the Church at Easter.

(St. Joseph, page 1)

patron and protector, Joseph's name was added to the daily Mass on December 8, 1962. St. Joseph is now honored with his wife Mary in the Church's most solemn of prayers.³

While silent in Scripture, St. Joseph "runs deep" in our present-day Catholic faith.

1 Burkey, Blaine O.F.M. Cap. "John XXIII: Pope of Saint Joseph." From the web: <https://stjisa.org/the-pope-of-st-joseph>. Accessed 26 February 2020.
 2 John XXIII. *LE VOICI CHE DA TUTTI: For the protection of St. Joseph on the Second Vatican Council*. The Holy See, 19 March 1961, www.papalencyclicals.net/john23/231evoci.htm. Accessed 26 February 2020.
 3 Burkey, Blaine O.F.M. Cap. "John XXIII: Pope of Saint Joseph."

QUERIDA AMAZONIA (Beloved Amazon)

POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
 OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
 TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD
 AND TO ALL PERSONS OF GOOD WILL
 (an overview)

"I dream of an Amazon region that fights for the rights of the poor, the original peoples and the least of our brothers and sisters, where their voices can be heard and their dignity advanced.

I dream of an Amazon region that can preserve its distinctive cultural riches, where the beauty of our humanity shines forth in so many varied ways.

I dream of an Amazon region that can jealously preserve its overwhelming natural beauty and the superabundant life teeming in its rivers and forests.

I dream of Christian communities capable of generous commitment, incarnate in the Amazon region, and giving the Church new faces with Amazonian features" [7. QA].

In a February 10 *ad limina* meeting with the bishops of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, Pope Francis addressed his latest document, *Querida Amazonia (QA)*, in which he presents his social, cultural, ecological and ecclesial dreams for the Amazon region.¹

Francis had been expected to discuss the possible ordination of married men as priests but instead emphasized the importance of collaboration in apostolic ministry by Catholics in various states of life. In an editorial of February 12, the Vatican's editorial director, Andrea Tornielli, explained that Pope Francis "decided to respond (to the synod) by not foreseeing changes or further possibilities of exceptions from those already provided for by current ecclesiastical discipline."²

Corbett Memorial Lecture 3:00pm, Sunday, April 19th Auditorium

Msgr. Kevin Irwin is this year's speaker. A research professor, faculty member of the School of Theology and Religious Studies at CUA and a prolific writer, Msgr. Irwin penned the "Introduction" to the Paulist Press edition of Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato si.* Msgr. Irwin will speak in the area of ecology and ethics. Watch the bulletin for details.

Francis' primary concern, according to Archbishop Aquila who attended the February 10 meeting, is that "the Gospel be proclaimed in the Amazon. And that all of us need to focus on Jesus Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel first. Because if we proclaim the Gospel and are faithful to the Gospel then vocations will come forth."

Francis also discussed the importance of having well-trained and well-informed catechists who are true disciples of Christ with a deep love for the Church, to "go into those regions [where there are few priests] and catechize." He cited the example of the Church in Africa that has seen a rise in vocations to the priesthood and religious life as a result of this kind of missionary discipleship. "The issue of priestly celibacy wasn't really part of the synod at all," Francis explained.

In a separate meeting on February 13th with the bishops of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, Francis was asked what key points of *Querida Amazonia* should be brought back to their dioceses. "The synod is about being missionaries, bringing the Gospel of Jesus to our brothers and sisters, especially amidst a lot of difficulties and a tremendous shortage of priests," said Bishop Wack who attended the gathering. "It is a rich document and it really challenges us to be missionary disciples."

To read this exhortation in full, visit:
www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/document/s/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20200202_querida-amazonia.html.

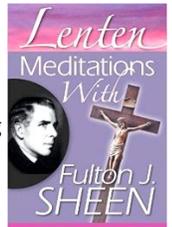
1 Mares, Courtney. "Pope Francis' Amazon exhortation calls for holiness, not married priests." *Catholic News Agency*. 12 February 2020. From the web: www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-amazon-exhortation-calls-for-holiness-not-married-priests-42216. Accessed 14 February 2020.
 2 Hannah Brockhaus, Hannah. "Pope Francis discusses 'Querida Amazonia' with US bishops in Rome." *Catholic News Agency*. 14 February 2020. From the web: www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-discusses-querida-amazonia-with-us-bishops-in-rome-85741. Accessed 18 February 2020.

Adult Formation Opportunities for the Season of Lent

Monday Morning Lenten Series with Fr. Regis Armstrong 9:15-10:15am, March 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 Parish Center Main Level

In November 2010, Pope Benedict XVI released *Verbum Domini (The Word of the Lord)*, described as the most important document on the Word of God since Vatican II's *Constitution on Divine Revelation*. When Pope Francis recently dedicated the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time to the celebration, study and dissemination of the Word of God, he emphasized this document.

Thursdays, 6:30-7:30pm
 March 12, 19, 26 & April 2
 In parish library



Drawn from Sheen's best-selling books, 40 reflections are paired with Scripture on the themes of forgiveness, conversion, repentance and renewal. Join us for small group faith sharing to enrich your Lenten journey.

Married Couples Lenten Retreat Holy Moments in Married Life: Experiencing Jesus' Resurrection with Fr. Emanuel Magro

Saturday, March 28th, 9:00a-5:00p
 Details and registration at:
www.blessedsacramentdc.org/couples-retreat

Ongoing Opportunities for All Adults

Tuesdays

8:45-10:30am Tue Morning Bible Study, PCML
 8:45-11:00am Walking w/Purpose, PCLL
 7:30-9:30pm Walking w/Purpose, school library

Wednesdays

8:45-11:00am BBB Bible Study, PCML
 7:00-9:00pm Wed Evening Bible Study, auditorium
New study soon! "The Mass," March 25 – May 6. Walk through the Mass with Bsp. Robert Barron and be transformed through insights on this most intimate encounter with Christ. See how the Mass starts by bringing us out of a fallen world into the heavenly realm and ends with the Holy Eucharist. For details or to register, email: ceilmalphrus@verizon.net.

Thursdays

8:45-10:30am Thur Morning Study, PCLL

Fridays of Lent:

6:00pm Stations of the Cross (after 5:30pm Mass). Pizza in the parish center afterward.