

12-20-20

4th Sunday Advent

## **Have the Faith and Trust to Follow in God's Will**

*"Mary said, 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.'" – Luke 1:38*

This weekend, the Church celebrates the 4<sup>th</sup> and final Sunday of Advent. This Sunday's Gospel passage from Saint Luke is the account of the Annunciation when the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will give birth to the Savior.

Just imagine for a moment how this young teenage girl must have felt at that moment. The scripture tells her that she was "greatly troubled" at the angel's greeting and wondered what it meant. Yet, the angel assures her that there is no need to be afraid for she has found favor with God. Then the angel says, "you will conceive and bear a son and you shall name him Jesus." Mary responds, "How can this be?" The angel says, paraphrasing, 'don't worry, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and God will make this possible. And, as proof of this, I tell you that your relative, Elizabeth, believed to be too old to have a child, is also expecting, because nothing is impossible with God.'

Most any woman would think this was a dream, that she must be hallucinating or imagining it. But Mary was no ordinary woman. She was favored by God and consented to His promises. Her faithful response, known as her fiat, was, "I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done unto me according to your word."

How often do we question God and his motives? Is God really asking me to do what I think He's asking? All of us want the certainty that what we are doing is based on God's will. We may not have an angel sent to us to deliver the message as Mary did, but we do have the Holy Spirit in our hearts to guide us and give us assurance.

Ask the Lord today to give you a heart of trust, obedience and faith, a heart of discernment and prayer. For when you invite God into the decisions that you have to make, both big and small, He will lead you and guide you to do what's best. It takes faith and trust to follow God's will. This is just another way we can ***Courageously Live the Gospel***. May you and your loved ones have a Merry Christmas!

- Bishop Gregory Parkes