

“The Word of God became flesh and made his dwelling among us; and we saw his glory” (John 1:14ab). The Annunciation, the 25th of March is a special day. God honors Mary by sending an Angel to ask her the most important question in all of history. Will you bear a son, the Son of God, the Son of the Most High?

Let us recall, that at this time Joseph and Mary were already betrothed but not yet living together under the same roof. Together they shared a chaste love for one another and for God. They prayed in common for the long awaited coming of the Messiah little realizing how God would use them to fulfill his plans for salvation.

So, although it comes as a surprise to Mary, it also comes as an answer to a prayer. Mary responds eloquently. “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).

God honored Mary with the invitation. Mary honored God in thought word and every conscious deed. We in turn honor Mary’s ‘yes’ to God’s plan. The humble virgin, already full of grace, gives her full consent to the coming of the Messiah. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the impossible becomes possible. With this conception, Mary offers her womb as a Tabernacle for the Lord. She also offers her entire life in complete dedication to God’s plan for salvation.

We think of her simple ‘yes’ as the very beginning of the Virgin birth ... but it was so much more. Mary had been saying ‘yes’ to God for as long as she could remember. Yes, she was immaculately conceived, but she continued to remain without sin because she always chose to do the right thing for God.

We know that someone who has 20/20 vision naturally sees much better than someone with very thick glasses. We might liken Mary’s spiritual vision to being 20/20. She could see what God wanted in any situation. She could also see how the devil would twist something good to look bad. Clearly seeing right from wrong and having a heartfelt desire to please God in all things, Mary said ‘yes’ to God at the Annunciation and in all things.

Through her profound ‘yes’ coupled with a lifetime of faithful witness, Mary invites us to say ‘yes’ to God’s plan for our life. We do not have the benefit of a personal invitation by the Archangel Gabriel. We do not have 20/20 spiritual vision. However, we have the bible with its four Gospels, the letters of the Apostles, the rich tradition of the Church and our own life experience to help us reflect upon God and the mysteries of our faith.

As we celebrate the Annunciation, we look in joyful anticipation to the Incarnation, the coming of Christ at Christmas. God became Man that man might be welcomed into Heaven for an eternity with God. We need look no further than the cross to see God’s love for us and his willingness to die for our sins. God’s act of love calls for a loving response on our part.

So many of our decisions are short-sighted and with self-interest. What if we were to try to see a little bit farther down the playing field? Mary said ‘yes’ to the Angel Gabriel, and in looking nine months forward she was saying ‘yes’ to being the Mother of the Christ Child. As we encounter decision points in our life, we might consider a series of questions:

- Is this what God wants for my life?
- Is my decision going to call for a loving sacrifice on my part?
- How will my choice today affect others 9 months from now?

We then couple our thoughtful discernment with a simple prayer to God: “Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will” (Ps 40: 8a & 9a). Or like Mary we might pray, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word.”