

Homily—Annunciation

What a wonderful, wonderful day! The Solemnity of the Annunciation is such an important feast that it gets transferred to the Monday after Easter week (if March 25 occurs during Holy Week). This year, that date was Palm Sunday, so the Annunciation gets transferred to today. But this year, it was good that it was moved because March usually heralds the beginning of spring, but even at the end of March, most of us were probably thinking: We've (still) got to make it through the winter. But now, spring is here, and we celebrate this joyous Easter season and the new life of Christ's resurrection.

We don't know exactly how old Mary was when she received Gabriel's visit. Most likely, she was about as old as many of you. But Mary isn't just any girl. She's our mother, our queen, and our model to follow Christ perfectly. In the gospel today, she has three reactions, perhaps ones we've experienced: 1) fear—she was greatly troubled; 2) confusion—how can this be?; and 3) faith: let it be done to me. If we have trouble discovering God's will in our lives—and we face fear and confusion at first—we can look to Mary for an example of faith in God's plan, even if we don't understand everything at the time. We need to see things from Mary's perspective, because through Mary's eyes we see clearer—she brings God so much nearer to us. And there's *no* problem, no matter how difficult, that our Blessed Mother can't solve, as long as we trust in her gracious assistance.

If you think about it, God's love never goes away. God always finds creative ways to reveal Himself to us, and most perfectly in his Son, Jesus. God's plans defy not only the devil, but also human logic. Who would've thought that the God of the universe would rely on the humility and free decision of a humble girl from Nazareth? Humanly speaking, we would've thought it takes a man who has a lion's heart—and it did: Jesus, through His sacrificial death on the cross. But God entrusted our salvation to a humble virgin, who obeyed God throughout her entire life. And with her consent, Jesus' mission as our redeemer began. So Mary's role in our salvation is absolutely essential, because without her, we don't have Jesus. Imagine the good things that God can do in us when we're faithful to the plan of God! And consider that the flesh of Jesus that we receive today in the Eucharist first came to dwell in the womb of our Blessed Mother. So she can teach us how to prepare a worthy dwelling for Her Son.

There are two things we can do to honor Mary today (and really, every day of our lives): 1) to pray to her, especially to pray the rosary each day. The battle we're fighting is a spiritual one, so we need to use the spiritual weapons God gives us. And history has shown the wonders and power of the holy rosary. 2) Imitate the faith of Mary in her beautiful fiat: "Let it be done to me according to your word." When we say "yes" to the Lord, we enable Him to do great things through us. So today, we give all praise and thanks to God for the role that Mary played in salvation history and for her continual assistance even today, and we can say to Jesus and Mary every day: I'm glad that you were born.