

Mary's encounter with the Angel

'In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "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 holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.' (Luke 1:27-38)



Virgin and Child, Marc Chagall, 1974. Part of stained glass window, Cathedral of Notre Dame, Reims, France

A Reflection

In the ordinariness of the home, going about her usual daily tasks, Mary's extraordinary encounter happens.

'Nothing will be impossible for God'

I wonder how hard it is for us to believe that - for God nothing is impossible, all things are possible for God. Wow! The Good News really is proclaimed in the small village of Nazareth to an ordinary girl, Mary.

I wonder as you sit at this station, in the ordinariness of the kitchen how you would feel about such an encounter? To wonder about that moment when going about her daily chores the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary. Her fear? Puzzlement? Wonder? Awe?

But after reassurances are given by the angel, the announcement is made that she is to be the Mother of the Son of God. It is the second announcement from the angel that salvation is coming. The angel had already made the first announcement to Zechariah, and his wife Elizabeth was already six months pregnant. Their baby was already preparing the way, was the forerunner to the Son of God.

After her wise and valid questions to the angel about how can this be, Mary obeys. She submits to God's call for her to be the Mother of God.

The image at this station is part of a stained glass window by Marc Chagall and is in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Reims, France. It is part of a window depicting the Old Testament prophecies about the coming of Christ. It is a fascinating image and I wonder how it may speak to you about Mary's call as the Mother of God. How it may speak to you about the indwelling of Christ within Mary by the Holy Spirit. And not only does Christ dwell within Mary but He dwells within each of us. Can we say 'yes Lord', to accept Christ's invitation to live within us, as Mary did for us all.

But I wonder if the image also speaks of something of our need to care for ourselves at the deepest level. The indwelling of Christ within us is the indwelling of love. Can we accept and behold that love for ourselves at the deepest level, as Christ loves each and every one of us?

In the ordinariness of our lives, in all our human fragility, doubt, worry, pain, joy.....can we, like Mary, accept the invitation to let Christ dwell richly in us, filling us with a love the world cannot give? Can we care for ourselves, every part of ourselves, as Christ tenderly cares for us, so that we can go out and proclaim His love to all we meet?

Can we respond as Mary did, 'Here I am, let it be with me according to your word'?



A Prayer

God of goodness,
God of surprises,
Send angels of inspiration,
to guide and enlighten me as you did Mary.
Awaken me again to my true calling;
Help me to walk with you on the paths laid out to me,
To know that for you, nothing is impossible.
Help me to accept the indwelling of Christ within me,
To know your love within me, today and always.
We ask this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.