

Pondering in our Heart
Scriptural Reflections on Mary

Mary The Servant of the Lord: The Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38)

Text

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.'

Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you,' the angel answered, 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.'

'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary, 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

Pondering the Word

- Notice the words and actions of Mary in this scene that indicate how she felt about the angel's greeting and his announcement. What do they reveal about her character? What changes in her emotions and responses do you think she expressed as the conversation with Gabriel progressed?
- What does Mary's question, "How can this be?" suggest to you about the interplay between faith that seeks for understanding and doubt or unbelief? In what sort of tone or attitude do you think Mary asked her question?

For Personal Reflection

- How does God communicate with you?
- Has it ever seemed to you that God was inviting you to do something you felt unequipped for? How did you respond?
- What do you think God is saying to you today?
- What is your part in God's plan? How can you co-operate more fully with God?

Prayer

*Loving and tender Father,
we pray that we might attend your call
with a fraction of the generosity of Mary.*

*Even when we know
that we do not know
where the road will end,
what we will confront on the way
and can only guess how we will manage.*

*Even when we wonder
did we say "yes" too quickly, agree too readily?
Should we have asked more questions?
Should we have insisted on more guidance?
Will there be a way back to the uncomplicated life
we left behind us, before we heard your voice?*

*Forgive our questions, loving Father.
Teach us to be generous-hearted
when we hear your call
and to be trustful of your kind purposes,
knowing that, in following you,
we will never journey beyond your shadow.*