

Forth Sunday of Advent Homily

Luke 1:26-38

On this last Sunday before Christmas, the Mass reading speaks about the preparations that God made for his Son to be born among us and as one of us. We wait for His coming into the world and into our lives. There is one thing God promised to each man and woman of His personal presence when He called them into His service. He never asked them to do anything for Him without making this promise. It was a simple promise, but an unimaginably great one and with this He remains close to us. With this closeness to human persons, God does not change but He allows us to change and became one with Him.

In the Gospel, we have the familiar passage of the Annunciation where the Angel tells Mary that she has found favor with God and announces the divine identity of the child whom Mary is about to conceive through the power of the Holy Spirit. The angel's statement that the Lord was with Mary, when it comes from God, implies a special position of importance for her. Much more than God's presence with David, the Lord is literally with her. She is the New Ark, beyond all reasonable expectations. She was to be the first Human being who could say of Jesus, "This is my body and this is my blood".

It is no wonder this simple girl was greatly troubled. Unlike Zechariah who was afraid of the sight of the angel, Mary was only troubled by his words. Gabriel understood their perplexity and spoke to her for reassurance. He then proceeded with the promise that Mary would conceive and bear a son. In the Jewish tradition it was a blessing from God. Yet Mary asked the question how it is possible because she was told that the child she would bear would be son of God and she had no relations with a man. The angel's response is that all will be accomplished by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit that was present at the first creation manifested the glory of the Temple and signified the divine presence in the world will now bring the new creation in her. She understood it all and said 'Yes' to God and the miracle of God becoming a human person took place there. In pondering, Mary realizes that 'nothing is impossible to God' and she was able to remain as a humble servant of the Lord.

Mary is described as “full of grace”, filled with God’s favor and graciousness, something which she has in no way earned. On the other hand, Mary had the freedom of choice. A request was made of her and she freely responds with a wholehearted ‘Yes’, “I am the slave or the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me”. Mary is thus presented as the perfect disciple. Mary’s ‘Yes’ changed the world. Her obedience to God’s call changed the lives of all of us in one way or another. At the moment when Mary said her yes, and that God’s will be fulfilled in her, a great event that took place in history. The Son of God took human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. This indeed is the tremendous description of the act of God’s love for us.

Life Message: We need to say a courageous and generous “yes” to God. True obedience comes from a free choice made in the light of what is true and good. It is by saying, with Jesus and Mary, a wholehearted and totally unconditional yes to Jesus that he will be reborn in me. By saying “yes”, Jesus will be born or re-born in others too.

We need to try to learn God’s plan for our lives. God has a plan for each individual person. In many cases, our work for God seems rather ordinary, but each ordinary task which we carry out fits into God’s plan in ways that we cannot understand. God desires not the skill of our hands, but the love of our hearts. We must realize that God is at home with us, but are we at home with him? Think well and make changes in life and prepare your heart and mind pure to receive child Jesus.