

# The Annunciation

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August 30, 2018

It was a cool Spring night in Nazareth. Moonlight bathed the sloping valley where freshly plowed fields and orchards waiting in quiet repose for the first morning sunlight.

A nearby sheepfold encircled newborn lambs, peacefully asleep beside their mothers. A pair of sheepdogs lay nearby. One asleep, and the other alert, with ears pricked up towards

the distant plane, where wild dogs were barking.

Midnight stars twinkled above the world with beams of moonlight, dancing through the almond trees in full bloom. A gentle breeze spread their sweet fragrance through the narrow, stone streets of Nazareth, until it came upon and adobe house set into a hillside. There, lamplight glimmered faintly from a small window set high upon a wall.

In this room, a virgin named Mary, who was betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter had retired hours earlier to pray.

Your Kingdom come.

At the tender age of 14, her heart was on fire with love for God. And she longed for the day the Promised Messiah would deliver her people. As she knelt at her tiny altar, her heart was caught up into the sweet Presence of the Almighty God.

The light that had faintly glimmered from her window was overcome with silvery brilliance that flooded every corner of the room. And Mary became aware of a heavenly visitor, who began speaking to her in a regal, yet gentle, voice.

"Hail, full of grace. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women."

This greeting startled her, but he continued.

"Fear not, Mary. For you have found grace with God. Behold, you shall conceive and bring forth a son. And will call him Jesus."

He spoke many wonderful promises about this son, for she was to be given the greatest privilege of all. Mary had been chosen by God to be his mother.

But she was puzzled as to how this would be accomplished, since she had been espoused as a virgin, to a young man who wished also to remain a virgin after their marriage.

The angel answered her, "The Holy Ghost will come upon you. And the power of the Most High shall

overshadow you. Therefore, the Holy One which shall be born of you, shall be called the Son of God."

Profoundly humbled, she replied, "Behold. The handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word."

Let us pray.

"Mary, most holy. Chosen to be the mother of God's only begotten Son. Pray for us, that we, too, may live our lives in complete faith. And that we may always respond as you did, in total trust and abandonment to His holy will. Through life's every circumstance, pray for us. That we will always respond from the heart, "Lord. Be it unto me, according to thy word."

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