

HOPING

The voice of God echoes in the depths of the human heart

(Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, #16)

We have turned to the text and then to life. Awakened by the Word we turn again towards the Lord. Read the text again. Reflect and share on some of the following:

1. What hope or prayer arises in your heart from reading and reflecting on this gospel story? What do you want to say to the Lord about this?
2. For with God nothing will be impossible. In prayer, invite the Lord into the situations in our lives or our world that seem hopeless or impossible.
3. Mary entrusts herself completely to the Word of God. In a few moments of silence we entrust ourselves to God's love.

Closing Prayer:

We gather our prayer together as we say:

The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,

R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit. Hail Mary...

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done unto me according to Your Word. Hail Mary...

And the Word was made flesh,

R. And dwelt among us. Hail Mary ...

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Hail Mary...



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Hearing Happening Hoping

Keeping AWAKE with Scripture this Advent

Week 4 ~ Luke 1:26-38



The Word of God comes to us to awaken our hearts. We begin by praying: God our Father, source of all light, you have sent your Son into the world, to reveal yourself to all your children. Send your Spirit upon us now, that we may meet Jesus in the Word that comes from you. May we come to know him, may we come to love him more deeply and so be drawn closer to the happiness of your Kingdom. Amen.

Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the word, and wondered what sort of greeting this might be.

And the angel said to her, "Be not afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in the womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name 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 father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end."

And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" And 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 called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

HEARING ~ *Speak Lord, your servants are listening!* You have the words of eternal life!

*We read the passage 2-3 times. Reflect and share on **some** of the following:*

1. How does Mary react to the angel's approach and greeting? What emotions well up in her?
2. Mary had found 'favour with God'. How was this to find expression in her life?
3. What is Mary's response to the angel?
4. How would you describe Mary's final response? Is it a response of courage or resignation? Or? Is it a response of fear, of trust, or of desperation?



HAPPENING ~ *Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*

This Scripture happens in our own lives and in the world around us

*We read the passage again and reflect on **some** of the following:*

1. "... she was greatly troubled at the word ..." Mary is troubled when the Lord draws close. When have we felt the Lord drawing close, and been disturbed?
2. "Be not afraid Mary..." The angel reassures Mary that God's hand is in what will unfold in her life. What fears have you for what may unfold in your life or in the lives of those you love?
3. "How shall this be..?" What questioning of God's ways and what God is doing have arisen in your heart during this time of COVID? Does your faith in God allow you to question? How does God receive your questioning heart?
4. "With God, nothing will be impossible!" The angel reassures Mary that the God will act in her and in those close to her. When have you been aware of God at work in your life and in the lives of others? How does this awareness give you hope for the future?

