

Annunciation of the Lord

★ LUKE 1:26-38

★ LECTONARY: FOURTH SUNDAY OF

ADVENT, YEAR B

★ SEE ALSO MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

(CARD 155)

★ CATECHISM 148, 273, 484-485, 2676

Before you were born, your parents might have known your sex or whether you were a twin. But the most important things about you were unknown—who you would be and what you would do in life. According to the Gospel of Luke, a young Jewish girl named Mary knew a great deal about her child before he was born. God told her through a messenger.

Mary lived in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. Tradition tells us that her parents were Ann and Joachim. When Mary was about 13 or 14 years old, she was betrothed or engaged to Joseph, a carpenter who was descended from King David. This engagement meant that Mary and Joseph were legally bound as in a real marriage, but they would have to wait several months before coming together as husband and wife.

As told in Luke 1:26-38, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary one day. He greeted her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." Mary wondered what the words meant. The angel continued, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." Gabriel announced that Mary would have a son whom she was to name Jesus. He would be great and be called the Son of the Most High. God would give him the throne of David, his father, and he would rule over the house of Jacob forever. With these words, Gabriel revealed that Mary's son would be the Son of God and the promised Savior from the house of David.



No doubt Mary had always prayed for the coming of the Messiah. Now God was letting her know that she was the one chosen to be the mother of the Savior. But Mary was puzzled. She asked how she could have a baby when she was still a virgin and only betrothed to Joseph. Gabriel answered that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of the Most High would overshadow her. Gabriel also informed Mary that her elderly relative Elizabeth was six months pregnant.

Mary, a woman of faith, was always open to God's will. Her response to the angel was, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." And the angel left. At Mary's "Yes," the Word became flesh. All that the prophets had foretold about the Messiah would be fulfilled through her. Mary became God's mother and ours.

Mary's child would truly be the Son of God, and his body would be totally formed from her body. In Genesis the Spirit of God had brooded over the waters, and the universe was created (1:1). Then God breathed into man the breath of life, the Spirit. Now with Mary, God's Spirit was beginning a new creation. A new Adam would be conceived.

During the Exodus God was present with the people in the ark of the covenant. In Mary, the new ark of the covenant, God is with us in the flesh. Her Son is called *Emmanuel*, which means "God with us." Mary's role as the Mother of God and all the privileges that come to her because of it make her name very appropriate: *Mary* means "exalted one."

"HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE, THE LORD IS WITH YOU"

READ the birth announcement to Zechariah in Luke 1:5-25. Make a chart with two columns. Title one "same" and the other "different."	DRAW the Annunciation. Where was Mary and what was she doing when the angel appeared? What did the angel look like?	DISCUSS St. Augustine's words: "Mary conceived Jesus in her heart before she conceived him in her womb."
Fill in the chart comparing the two Annunciation stories.		