

Family Gospel Lesson

Luke 1:24—38

The Annunciation of the Theotokos is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of our Church. In Greek, the word for annunciation comes from the word “gospel,” meaning good news. An annunciation is also defined as an announcement. In this instance, the Archangel Gabriel announces that Mary will bear a child—not just any child, but the Son of God. Hence, the angel is also announcing that Mary will become the Theotokos, which may be translated the “God-bearer.” Mary was a young girl when the Annunciation took place, in her early teens. Yet her faith, humility, and obedience to God were great. God did not impose this role on Mary—she had a choice. She could have run out of fear or responded in any number of ways to let God know that she did not want this to happen. But this is not what Mary chose to do. Instead, she faithfully said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” We are called to do the same every day—to hear the “good news” of God for our lives and to respond with her courage, faith, and obedience: “let it be according to your Word—Jesus Christ!”



For Consideration

- What did the Archangel Gabriel come to tell Mary? How does Mary respond?
- When Mary says, “Behold, the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word,” what does she mean?
- What does this Gospel passage mean for our lives?

TO DO TOGETHER

Write a Song

Write down some of the key words from this Gospel reading and write a song about the Annunciation. If you are not particularly musical, borrow music from a popular song that your family knows, and rework the words. At the end of your songwriting session, take some time to learn the apolytikion of the Annunciation. You can pray it by prayerfully reciting it together as a family, or if you know how to teach everyone to chant the hymn.

Servant of God

When Mary chose to bear Christ, she said, “Behold, the maidservant of the Lord!” We are all constantly called to be servants of God, but how often do we think of this? Write a list of all the different things you think are involved in being a servant of God. Look in the Bible using a concordance and find some passages with the word “servant.” Discuss as a family how you are serving the Lord and how you can respond like Mary—by giving your entire being to God so that Christ can live in you.

Attend Matins for the Feast

It can be difficult to regularly attend Matins (the service before the Divine Liturgy) as a family. Try to be present at this beautiful service together on the Feast of Annunciation. If you cannot, read the prayers as a family in your home, either the morning of the feast or the evening before. Matins services for each Sunday and major feast days can be found on the Web site of Saint Gregory Palamas Monastery at <http://sgpm.goarch.org/ematins/main.htm>.

Closing Prayer

Today marks the crowning of our salvation and the revelation of the mystery before all ages. For the Son of God becomes the son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaims the grace. Wherefore, we also cry out with him, “Hail, O full of grace, the Lord is with you.”

—Apolytikion of the Annunciation

Final Thought

In the life of every Christian there will be divine annunciations, moments when God lets us know His will and His intention concerning us. But all these annunciations must unite to become the one essential Annunciation: the Annunciation that Jesus can be born in us, can be born through us—not in the same way that He was conceived and brought into the world by the Virgin Mary, for that is a unique miracle that cannot be equaled, but in the sense that the Savior takes spiritual and, at the same time, very real possession of our being. And then let us remember that every authentic Annunciation is immediately followed by a Visitation: the divine favor that has been granted to us must straightway release an impulse in us to let it flow out to our brothers, which is expressed through some loving act.

—from The Year of Grace of the Lord by a Monk of the Eastern Church



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