

MEDITATION 2

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, ³³ and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" ³⁵ And the angel said to her in reply, "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. ³⁶ And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; ³⁷ for nothing will be impossible for God." ³⁸ Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Comment

Salvation history begins with an announcement. Mary shall conceive a child by the Holy Spirit. Mary may be young, but she is not naive. She asks the angel: how can this be? But above all, a decision is demanded of Mary.

Were the scene filmed from the perspective of heaven, one would now be able to hear a pin drop, since all would be anxiously hoping for Mary's "yes."

God does not compel us humans, but rather invites us to come out of our comfort zone and daily routine. Mary's brave acceptance of that "crazy" announcement (without any "ifs," "ands," or "buts") begins a turning point in human history. God becomes human — not on the red carpet but as a helpless little child.

The gospels tell us little about the childhood of Jesus. But at least we know about Joseph, Mary's fiancé and later her husband. He says not a single word in the gospels. Luke does not tell us how he accepted the message of the angel; in Matthew 1:18-25, he receives his own message from an angel, in a dream.

In the adult life of Jesus God does not intervene directly, although he often intervenes in the early days by sending dreams to Joseph, to keep the child and his family from harm.

As with all children, parents are also important for Jesus as he grows up. From them he received an understanding of God and the world, even if he later outgrew it in his own special way. Above all, however, he received from them love.

Suggestions

- First I prepare the scene for myself.
- What important decisions have I made in my life?
- Why did I choose one thing rather than another? Would I make the same choice today?
- Can I give God an unconditional “yes,” like Mary? What consequences does that have for me?
- What is my calling? How and when has God called me in my life?
- My faith has changed as I grew up. Do I still cling to certain ideas of my childhood faith? In what respect have I outgrown them, like Jesus?

Film

The Gospel according to Matthew – Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo
Italy 1964. 183 Minutes. Directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini.