

# Do Not Be Afraid

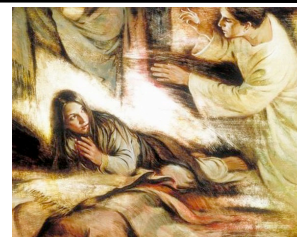
## Advent 2013

Luke 1:26-38 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" <sup>29</sup> But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. <sup>30</sup> Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. <sup>32</sup> He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. <sup>33</sup> And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup> Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" <sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For with God nothing will be impossible." <sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (NKJ)

### REVIEW

This familiar passage concerns a watershed moment in history.

- *God's choice of Mary shows us that He came to save a lowly people.*
  - *Mary was handmaiden of with no claim to human significance.*
  - *Mary's name means "bitter myrrh," accurately reflecting the Jews circumstances as suffering and oppressed people.*
- *Christ's birth was a surprise, even though it was expected.*
  - *Israel had long awaited the arrival of the Messiah.*
  - *No one would have expected the Christ to be born to such a lowly family and in a manner that invited ridicule and scorn.*



### GABRIEL AND MARY

Gabriel intruded upon a surprised Mary, delivering his message. He instructed her in concerning the proper response. She is to rejoice. This news is a blessing.

- *Mary is told she is highly favored. She has been "graced."*
- *Mary is "greatly troubled," not only by the encounter but because of the strange words.*
- *Mary begins to carefully deliberate and "reason out" what these words might mean.*

### FEAR NOT – I AM WITH YOU

Divine encounters always excite fear in human beings. That is to be expected when the corrupt and sinful comes into close proximity with that which is holy. However, whenever "Fear not" is coupled with "the Lord is with you," it denotes a great but difficult calling.

- *Old Testament examples of this include Joshua, Gideon and Jeremiah.*
- *To prepare Mary for her calling Gabriel tells her, "the Lord is with you...Do not be afraid."*
  - *The grace she has found is an unexpected surprise; an unsought blessing.*
  - *The calling is great but difficult. Her path will be filled with much pain and sorrow.*

Like Mary, we too should rejoice and fear not. If the Lord be for us, who can be against us?