

Anticipation

Wednesday

“Great Expectations”

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 holy; he will be called the Son of God....” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” (Luke 1.35, 38)

In this scene of the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel delivers an amazing revelation: Mary has been chosen to be the mother of God’s son! This young woman—unwed, unlettered, un-stationed, altogether unlikely—is nevertheless chosen to be an incredible instrument of God’s working within history. She was to become *theotokos*, or “God-bearer” for the world. The news was undoubtedly unnerving and a cause for deep reflection, yet the tone was simultaneously set for great expectations.

God’s messengers continue to speak today. Sometimes they take the form of pets out on a walk. Sometimes they’re in the shape of books or movies or songs. At other times the messenger looks like a homeless woman begging for food on a cold winter’s night. Whatever “angels” come into our lives, the ideas they herald can be profound, giving us pause and causing a need for serious deliberation. But these revelations are also pregnant with possibility. If we adopt Mary’s “here am I” attitude, then we too open ourselves to the opportunity of bearing God’s love into the world. Through that openness, we can all become *theotokos*, embracing an abundance of great expectations!

O God, thank you for speaking to us in so many ways. This Advent help us to say yes to your Spirit like Mary did. Open us to your limitless possibilities, and maintain in us a capacity for awe and great expectations. Amen.

Practice: Slowly read Luke 1.26-38 several times. Each time, imagine yourself in the scene. See the scenery; hear the words and sounds; smell the smoke and food; taste the air; touch the dirt, wood and stone. Immerse yourself into the passage as it happens all around you. Let yourself fall into the contemplation of God’s revelation.