

**“Do not be Afraid.”**

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Luke 1.26-38  
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Throughout biblical history and the history of the church, we have encountered men and women who are examples of dedication, commitment and dedication to the purposes of God. There is no doubt that all of them should receive our admiration.

Among them all, Mary, the mother of our Lord, is the greatest example of all these virtues. Therefore, she must serve the Church as an example of commitment and dedication to the good news of God in Christ. In the history of the Church there has not been a person with a more important mission than to carry the incarnation of God in her womb. For this reason, Mary must serve as an example of Christian commitment. For this reason, we must look at it as the maximum expression of the desire to serve God and his people.

The text of Luke's gospel for this Fourth Sunday of Advent presents us with the annunciation of the birth of Jesus. The evangelist informs us in Luke 2.19 that “...Mary kept all these things, meditating on them in her heart.” Definitely, the experience of the annunciation would have left an indelible mark on Mary's heart. This Fourth Sunday of Advent, Mary calls us to share with her in the expectation of the manifestation of God in Jesus. How would we feel if we were Mary, listening to the angel giving us an announcement of such magnitude? What would be our response?

There are three phrases in this pericope that are particularly important for us. I invite you to pay more attention to them.

**“Blessed are you among women”** From the moment of the Annunciation Mary was called “blessed.” The Mother of Our Lord has been declared by God to be a person full of blessings. Although we do not share the idea of the adoration of Mary. We cannot fail to recognize the primary role that Mary plays in our salvation history.

The Mother of Our Lord was the wineskin in which God became a person. If we proclaim Jesus as the incarnation of God, we do so because he became flesh in the womb of Mary. Jesus was fed from Mary's breast, it was she who brought him into the world with labor pains and, finally, it was also she who accompanied him on the cross.

Mary becomes a blessed woman among women, not only because she is the chosen vessel; also, for being an example of detachment; She does not seek her own benefit but that of others; she always recognizes the grace and goodness of God in choosing her. God is the one who chooses her, being young, poor and despised, to be the mother of her Son, of which she does not boast, but rather she strips herself of herself and gives herself to the goodness of God. She is an example to follow both in her humility and in her recognition of God's goodness. Mary is the first preacher of the incarnation of Christ, the first to announce the gospel.

**“Mary, do not be afraid”**. It is understandable that the sudden appearance of the angel and his mysterious greeting: "Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you" caused great confusion in Mary. Like other characters in the Holy Scriptures, she trembles before the mystery of God's call.

The angel, noticing Mary's reaction and guessing what is happening in her heart, tells her: "Do not be afraid!" In the same way God also knows what is in our hearts. He knows well the challenges we must face in life, especially when we are faced with the fundamental decisions on which depends what we will be and what we will do in this world.

In those moments we feel disturbed and overcome by so many fears. In moments when doubts and fears flood our hearts, it is essential to listen to the voice of God: “Fear not.” The first thing to do to overcome fears is to identify them clearly, so as not to waste time and energy. For this reason, I invite you to look inside yourselves and "give a name" to your fears. The Word of God does not deny the human feeling of fear or its many causes. Abraham was afraid, Jacob was afraid, and so were Moses, Peter, and the Apostles. Jesus himself experienced fear and anguish.

Being afraid does not mean lack of faith; But it can be an obstacle that prevents us from clearly seeing the presence of God. Fear should never have the last word, but rather it should be an opportunity to allow the goodness of God to manifest and allow us to move forward.

**“Let it be done to me according to your word”.** These words with which we are concerned are a call and challenge to the Church. Are we willing to let it be done in us according to the living word of God in Christ? Are we willing to let God be incarnated in our actions of justice?

This Fourth Sunday of Advent, as we prepare to receive Christ in his Nativity, Mary invites us to be part of God's story. Just as Mary was at God's disposal, the congregation is invited to let the Spirit of God manifest in us. Mary's disposition must be the same one that God finds among his people today. Our people should respond to God's call in the same way that the young mother did. When God calls and asks us if we want to be the vessel through which God is incarnated again and again in the midst of humanity, our response should always be: “Here is the servant [or servant] of the Lord; Let it be done to me according to your word.” Let's let Mary's actions and decisions illuminate the path to follow.