

25 March – Annunciation

SOLEMNITY; white

This feast originated in the East during the sixth century and gained universal observance in the West during the eighth century. It is a feast of the Lord, commemorating the announcement to the Virgin Mary of the Word made flesh, Mary's acceptance of God's will, and the conception of Christ nine months before Christmas. Its occurrence close to Easter links the incarnation with the whole mystery of human redemption in Christ.

First Reading † Isaiah 7:10-14, 8:10c

Behold, the virgin shall conceive.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The Lord spoke to Ahaz again and said:

‘Ask the Lord your God for a sign,
either in the depths of Sheol or in the heights above.’

But Ahaz said,

‘I will not ask. I will not put the Lord to the test.’

He then said:

‘Listen now, House of David!
Not satisfied with trying human patience,
will you try my God's patience too?

The Lord will give you a sign in any case.
Look, the virgin is with child
and will give birth to a son
whom she will call Immanuel.
[A name which means ‘God-is-with-us’.]

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial † Psalm 39(40):7-11

Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

You delight not in sacrifice and offerings,
but in an open ear.
You do not ask for holocaust and victim.
Then I said, ‘See, I have come.’

Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

In the scroll of the book it stands written of me,
‘I delight to do your will, O my God;
your Law lies deep within me.’

Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

Your righteousness I have proclaimed
in the great assembly.
My lips I have not sealed;
you know it, O Lord.

Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

Your saving help I have not hidden in my heart;
of your faithfulness and salvation I have spoken.
I made no secret of your merciful love
and your faithfulness to the great assembly.

Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.

Second Reading † Hebrews 10:4-10

In the scroll of the book it was written of me that I should obey your will, O God.

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

Bulls' blood and goats' blood are incapable of taking away sins, and that is why he said, on coming into the world:

*You wanted no sacrifice or cereal offering,
but you prepared for me a body.
You took no pleasure in burnt offerings or sacrifices for sin;
then said, 'Here am I, I am coming,'
in the scroll of the book it is written of me,
to do your will, O God.*

He says first: You wanted no sacrifices, cereal offerings, burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them – the offerings according to the Law – and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to do your will.

He is abolishing the first sort to establish the second. And by this will we have been made holy through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ made once and for all.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation † John 1:14

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!
The word of God became flesh and dwelt among us;
and we saw his glory.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Gospel † Luke 1:26-38

You are to conceive and bear a son.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her,

'Rejoice full of grace! The Lord is with you.'

She was deeply disturbed by these words and pondered what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her,

'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. Look! You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.'

Mary said to the angel,

'But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?'

In answer the angel said to her,

‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. And see, your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she who was said to be barren is now in her sixth month, *for nothing is impossible to God.*’

Mary said,

‘Here I am, the Lord’s servant, let it happen to me as you have said.’

And the angel left her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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