

The Announcement Hail Mary!

Celebrate the world's biggest announcement with Mary this Lent.

What if Mary had said 'no'? Would the Archangel Gabriel have tried the maiden next door? Did God have a plan B for saving the world?

By Marilyn Rodrigues

March 2011



Mar 8: Shrove Tuesday

Mar 9: Ash Wednesday

Mar 13: Lent 1

Temptation

Mar 17: St Patrick

Mar 20: Lent 2

The Glory of God

Mar 25: The Annunciation

Mar 27: Lent 3

Living Water

Celebrate: the world's biggest announcement with Mary this Month

I remember the excitement and nervous anticipation with which my husband and I went to tell our parents that we were going to get married, and two and a half years later that we were going to have our first baby.

Each time we were bursting to tell our good news, and more than a little nervous about their reaction. What wonderful and unforgettable moments they were!

Making a joyful announcement to our stunned and happy loved ones is certainly one of the peak experiences of life.

Imagine the moment in which the angel Gabriel



approached Mary to make the greatest announcement ever made, "Rejoice highly favoured one...You will bear a son... the son of the Most High....His kingdom will have no end". The whole of creation, heaven and earth, must have held its breath in that moment.

The Annunciation is one of the major feasts of the Church's liturgical year. It is then, nine months before Christmas, that we celebrate the Incarnation of Christ.

The Angelus prayer commemorates the moment that God entered human history in the beginnings of an embryo hidden in Mary's womb. The prayer has a history going back at least 700 years. It is traditionally prayed at 6am, midday, and 6pm and accompanied by the ringing of bells.

opportunities for relationship growth, even in the context of already close, communal relations".



Plan B?

What if Mary had said 'no'? Would the Archangel Gabriel have tried the maiden next door? Did God have a plan B for saving the world?

Our salvation history could have turned out differently. Mary wasn't programmed to say yes any more than a young woman who loves a young man is programmed to say yes to his marriage proposal. But God was confident of her love.

We didn't have a plan B when we married. We didn't know what challenges were around the corner – problems at work, disillusionment, an unexpected pregnancy! But we find that God provides the sufficient grace to get us through each difficulty.

Mary is 'full of grace' because God supplied the grace needed for her huge task. St Augustine wrote of Mary that, "He chose the mother he had created; he created the mother he had chosen".

In great tenderness and in line with the plan

God had already revealed to Abraham and the prophets, Mary was made the first person to be redeemed by Christ when she was conceived without sin. Thus she was uniquely suited to be the mother of Christ and has a special place in history.

Mary is our co-redemptrix; she participated in a unique way in the redeeming of all of humanity to full, loving relationship with God through Jesus' life, passion and death on the cross.

Apart from Jesus, she is the human par excellence. She shows us the way to live a fully, most beautifully human, way of life.

She is full of grace and glory because of what God did in her. Our marriages and families shine forth to the extent that we allow God to work in us.

In Mary we see hope for ourselves, our families, our world.



Saying 'Yes'

God created us for union with him. He invites us to share in his life of love. God puts before us every day in a million different ways the invitation to be in intimacy with him.

He speaks his delight in us in the birdsong that greets us each morning. He blesses us in both sunshine and life-giving rain.

He calls us to grow in love and virtue through the exasperating needs of our children and the less pressing but real needs of our spouses and other family members, friends and work. It's hard work, so he offers to take most of the burden for us (Matthew 11: 28-30).

Yet we still resist his invitations.

We persist in doing things our own way, according to our own

agenda.

We either say, "No thanks" or "Yes, but not just now".

Mary was in the midst of an ordinary day when God's Archangel broke in upon it with his invitation. But even on ordinary day she was lovingly attentive to God. Mary lived her life in an emphatic 'yes' to every invitation, small and great, which the Lord put before her.

Her fiat was a yes to God, but it was also a yes to us, her future spiritual children. For our sake she assented to Joseph's hurt and confusion, to a sweet baby boy, to that same boy's glorious miracles, and later his hanging on the cross.

She trusted that her story would have a good ending.

Gratitude to Mary for her trust is most beautifully expressed by our own assent to God, in the big and little invitations he puts before us.



Celebrating the Annunciation

Why not pray the Angelus as a Lenten observance this year, perhaps setting your mobile phone to chime at each day one or more of the three set hours? You might like to synchronise your Angelus prayer with a friend or family member.

Children can help to make an Annunciation candle, with a picture of the baby Jesus hidden inside, to be lit on the feast day and then again at Christmas, or make their own craft candle using our template.

A Google Images search will reveal a stunning array of Annunciation art. Or open an art book (your own or your library's) to an annunciation scene and keep it where you will see it during the day or in your family's prayer space if you have one.

Make an angel food cake and ice it with blue icing, the traditional colour for Mary. We found a good angel food cake recipe at

<http://www.thebaytree.com.au/new%20site/services/recipes/angel%20food%20recipe.html>

The Annunciation Candle

Use a large pillar candle of white (for purity) or blue (for Mary). Carve a niche in the wax big enough to fit inside it a tiny image of the infant Jesus from an old Christmas card.

Fasten a small piece of white cloth over the opening with pins pushed into the wax. At Christmas remove the little curtain to reveal the baby Jesus.

Source: Women for faith and family <http://www.wf-f.org/Annunciation.html>



The Angelus

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace,

The Lord is with thee;

Blessed art thou among women,

And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,

Pray for us sinners,

Now and at the hour of our death. Amen

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, etc.

V. And the Word was made Flesh.

R. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, etc.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ thy son was made known by the message of an angel, may by His passion and cross be brought to the glory of his resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen.

About the Author

Marilyn Rodrigues is a Catholic writer and editor. She lives with her husband Peter and their four children in Sydney.

© 2011 PMRC Australia

CathFamily is a monthly e-newsletter designed to help families develop traditions that encourage faith and family life. This sheet can be reproduced by schools, parishes and community groups for non-commercial purposes.

www.cathfamily.org



For More Resources

Making the Home the Heart of the Church



LivingWell Media

**Visit our Store
Books & Resources
for Catholic Families,
Schools & Parishes**

>> Click Here<<

**The Celebrate Love
Experience**

**A two day seminar for
married couples to enrich,
enliven and energise their
relationship.**

>> Click Here<<

**My School Diary & My
Reading Record**

**Limited stock still available
for My School Diary 2011 &
My Reading Record**

Order Now

>> Click Here<<



For Print Friendly Version << Click Here>>