

Friday 25 March 2022

Lady Day

The annunciation of our Lord



The icon known as
Our Lady of Kyiv

'Lady Day' is the old name for the Feast of the Annunciation which celebrates the Archangel Gabriel visiting the Virgin Mary. He said she would conceive and become the mother of Jesus, the Jewish Messiah and Son of God. Gabriel told Mary to name the baby 'Jesus', which means 'God saves'. The Annunciation therefore announces the Incarnation.

Luke 1:26–38 describes the story. It says, 'The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.'

Lady Day occurs exactly nine months before Christmas because that's the natural gestation period for a human child. We therefore celebrate it on 25 March.

Sermon © Revd Denise Owen.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © The publishers of the NRSV translation

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

HYMN 1 Tell out my soul (the Magnificat) [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

The grace of God has dawned upon the world

through our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who sacrificed himself for us to purify a people as his own.

Let us confess our sins.

All **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

It's usual to omit the Gloria during Lent

The Collect for Lady Day

We beseech you, O Lord,
pour your grace into our hearts,
that as we have known the incarnation
of your Son Jesus Christ
by the message of an angel,
so by his cross and passion
we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

First reading

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, 'Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.

Then Isaiah said, 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel.' *Isaiah 7:10-14a*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure'. Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God' (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).' When he said, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. *Hebrews 10:4-10*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Longing for light

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be

afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' 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 Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

Mary said: 'My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he has had regard for the humble state of His bond-slave; for behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is his name and his mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear him. He has done mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble. He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty-handed. He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.'

And Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her home.

Luke 1:26-56

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

For many years I've been suspicious of devotion to the Virgin Mary. I couldn't understand why she was so prominent in the devotional lives of some people. I couldn't understand why so many churches have statues of the Virgin in front of which people pray, or light a candle. I couldn't understand why some people pray the 'Hail Mary' with such fervour. I couldn't understand why, when we owe our worship to God, anyone would need to venerate Mary. These acts of devotion don't only belong to the Roman Catholic or Orthodox Churches: there are churches and people in the Church of England who value these religious practices. It has taken me a long

time to begin to appreciate why for some the Blessed Virgin is such a significant and helpful figure in their faith, and in the tradition of the Church.

The icon on the cover of today's liturgy is a well-known image with Mary tenderly holding the baby Jesus. It is an image seen on lots of icons, paintings, and statues, but this icon is particularly poignant at this time as its name is Our Lady of Kyiv, and this is where my scepticism about devotion to Mary meets the reality of life in the world. Imagine if you are a mother in Ukraine, or a refugee fleeing with your children from conflict and you see this icon, what would it say to you? What does it say to families in Ukraine, or Yemen, or Afghanistan? The image depicts a mother holding a young child, just as mothers everywhere hold their young children—a child who is vulnerable, a child living in an unjust and unpredictable world, a child, perhaps, facing an uncertain future.

If we look more closely at the icon, we may see the child reaching up to his mother, his face full of love and trust. But what about Mary? She is looking out from the icon, she is looking at us, and what can we read in her face? Her face seems to be a face full of sorrow, a face which knows the uncertainty and even cruelty of the world. It's a face that knows the kind of world her beloved child has been born into. If we read the icon in this way, then it's easy to see why devotion to Mary brings comfort and solace. Mary knows the suffering of mothers whose sons are arrested, tortured, killed; she knows the worry of having a child who speaks out for justice and truth against oppressive political and religious authorities; she knows how difficult it is to live with fear for the safety of a child. In this icon I see the face of a woman, a mother, who knows the worst of what the world and humankind can do.

I may well be reading into this icon of Our Lady of Kyiv, the terrible war that is being waged in Ukraine. This interpretation may not be what the icon writer (icons are 'written' not 'drawn' or 'painted') originally meant, but icons can be used as commentaries on God's relationship with God's world and people. Icons are meant to prompt prayer and contemplation, and we don't pray and contemplate in a vacuum. We pray, meditate, and contemplate in the light of events happening now in the world. In this icon we get a glimpse of the tender love that God has for God's people, the compassion and pity God's feels for those who are suffering, and perhaps even God's commandment to care for the widow, and orphan, the hungry and the refugee. Again, I read all this in the face of Blessed Mary in the icon.

Today is the Feast of the Annunciation. The day when we remember that the angel Gabriel came to earth and spoke to Mary, asking her if she would be willing to give birth to God's Son. It's hard to imagine how startled this young woman must have felt at such a request, and yet she answered with a humble 'Yes'. That response brought the greatest hope for the salvation of humankind in the form of a small baby.

Jesus is our greatest hope. He is our hope for forgiveness and peace, reconciliation and healing, the only sure hope of humankind. And yet, this greatest hope was held in the arms of a loving mother, as in the icon, making a gesture that many young children make, reaching for his mother's face. Here is the Saviour of the World showing his supreme human vulnerability in a way that all loving families can recognise, is it any wonder that people turn to his mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and see in her their own situation? Is it any wonder that they see in her a person who knows their fear and pain, and yes, their joys, and want to turn to her in thanksgiving?

So, I think those mothers fleeing Ukraine, or any other war-torn country, those mothers sheltering from missile fire, those mothers worried for their soldier daughters and sons have every right to look to the Blessed Virgin, Our Lady of Kyiv, and find in her a companion in their fear and uncertainty, a soul who knows the depths of sorrow, and a mother whose son died in the most terrible of ways. They also find a woman of deep, deep faith, who always points others to her Lord and our Lord, Jesus Christ Saviour, of the World. Amen

Prayers of intercession

On this day the Father made our salvation known to Mary by the message of an angel. Filled with confidence, let us pray:

You chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son. Have mercy on all who wait for your redemption. We pray for the Church ... [*The Church universal*]

Through your angel Gabriel you brought a message of peace and joy to Mary. Give to the world the joy and peace of salvation. We pray for ... [*the peace of the world*]

By the consent of your handmaid and the power of the Holy Spirit, your Word came to dwell among us. Open our hearts to receive Christ, as Mary the Virgin received him. We pray for ... [*those present, those in our hearts*]

You look with compassion on the lowly and fill the hungry with good things. Encourage the downhearted, help all those in need and comfort those near to death.

We pray for ... [*the sick, the suffering, the helpless*]

To you, O God, nothing is impossible, and you alone do marvellous things; save us, and bring us on the last day with ... and all the faithful departed into your glorious kingdom.

Grant, O Lord, that by the riches of your grace we may grow up into him who unites our life to yours, even he who is the first-born of all creation, your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The peace

In the tender mercy of our God,
the dayspring from on high shall break upon us,
to give light to those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Mary mother of our God (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,
fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

And the blessing of God the Almighty:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Blest are the pure in heart (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ.
Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

We give you thanks and praise
that the Virgin Mary heard with faith the message of the angel,
and by the power of your Holy Spirit
conceived and bore the Word made flesh.

From the warmth of her womb
to the stillness of the grave
he shared our life in human form.
In him new light has dawned upon the world
and you have become one with us
that we might become one with you
in your glorious kingdom.

Therefore earth unites with heaven
to sing a new song of praise;
we too join with angels and archangels
as they proclaim your glory without end:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with St Mary and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink

in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

God Most High,
whose handmaid bore the Word made flesh:
we thank you that in this sacrament of our redemption
you visit us with your Holy Spirit
and overshadow us by your power;
strengthen us to walk with Mary the joyful path of obedience
and so to bring forth the fruits of holiness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.