

Thursday 15 August 2024

The Virgin Mary



The Annunciation: the Archangel Gabriel speaks to Mary
Street art in Naples.

Mary was a young Jewish girl living in Nazareth when the Archangel Gabriel gave her a message from the Lord, that she was to be the bearer of the Son of God to the world. Her response was, 'Let it be to me according to your word,' which showed her desire to obey God and her reverence for his Word; it also showed she was worthy to bear the Word made flesh.

In most of Christendom, today is celebrated as the major feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Sermon © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

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 are included at the end.

The hymns can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

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.

Born of a woman, born under the law,

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of sin:

let us come to him that he may heal us and set us free:

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.

The Gloria

All Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

The Collect for the Blessèd Virgin Mary

Almighty God,
who looked upon the lowliness of the Blessèd Virgin Mary
and chose her to be the mother of your only Son:
grant that we who are redeemed by his blood
may share with her in the glory of your eternal kingdom;
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

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Isaiah 61:10-11

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Revelation of St John the Divine

God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. Then another portent appeared in heaven: a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne; and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that there she can be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.'

Revelation 11:19—12:6, 10

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Name of all majesty

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.'

Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned to her home. *Luke 1:46-55*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Mary was an ordinary Palestinian girl who experienced a profound encounter with an Archangel, then with God, and then had the baby we call Jesus. Jesus was wholly human yet sinless. He was born with a human mother yet had no biological father. There is clearly something very unusual going on! To what extent was Jesus special because of God's intervention and to what extent was he special because of Mary?

Christians have struggled to understand Mary since the beginning of Christianity. From very early years, one strand of thought said that Mary was herself ultra-special. So, by the second century, some people said Mary was also sinless. By the third century, the Church had invented a genealogy for Mary: they said her parents were Anna Joachim, who might also have been sinless. But if so, then Anna and Joachim's parents would also need to be sinless. These discussions got out of hand so, by the fifth-century, some suggested that she came from a pure blood-line that extended all the way back to Adam and Eve—none of whom had ever sinned.

There is a profound problem here: if Mary came from a unique biological strand that had maintained its sinlessness, then Jesus' achievement would neither be unique nor particularly special. He would have been one of many. It prompts us to ask why Jesus failed to pass on his sinlessness; why were Jesus' brothers and sisters not sinless like him? And, importantly, *why aren't we?*

In fact, we undermine Jesus in proportion that we elevate Mary and decide she was sinless. These kinds of argument illustrate why Jesus' uniqueness cannot be explained by Mary alone. Stated otherwise, if Jesus' parentage explains his sinlessness then it was God and not Mary we need to discuss. It may also explain why the Scriptures call him 'Son of God' rather than 'Son of Mary' and why some ancient liturgies describe Him as 'Son of God *yet* Son of Mary'—the phrase tries to describe the spiritual tug of war between Jesus' two natures of divine and human.

It's not wise to push these arguments against Mary. She will have been a superb parent—why else would God have chosen her to be Jesus' mother rather than someone else? Scripture suggests she remained close to Jesus. They also show that he always revered her. She therefore helps demonstrate that love is a key aspect of living a truly Christian life.

When Mary accepted God's challenge to become Jesus' mother she accompanied her 'yes' with a song that today we call the 'Magnificat' (Luke 1:46–55). In it she described God as Holy and reiterated his mercy and power. She anticipated the Christian themes seeking of justice and equality. It means she knew the reality and cost of serving God ... and yet accepted the call.

Jesus was fully human as well as fully God. His mother's human nature gave him the classic human choice of serving God or not. And many of His ideas about discipleship agree so closely with the Magnificat that we probably recognise Mary's hand in his spiritual upbringing. We discern her nurture rather than her nature: her gift to Jesus, to the Church, and to us, was her obedience before God which she passed to her son.

Therefore, as we seek to follow Jesus in our own lives, we're invited to copy Mary's joyful 'Yes' with our own and then work toward the Kingdom.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

As we pray to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we say with Mary: Lord, have mercy on those who fear you. Holy is your name.

Your prophet of old foretold a day when a virgin would conceive and bear a son who would be called God-with-us. Help us to look forward to your deliverance and to seek the fullness of your kingdom.

Lord, have mercy on those who fear you.

All Holy is your name.

Your angel declared to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Saviour. Help [... and] every Christian person to be open to your word and obedient to your will. Lord, have mercy on those who fear you.

All Holy is your name.

Mary rejoiced with Elizabeth and sang your praise, 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.' Help us to live joyful lives that sing your praise.

Lord, have mercy on those who fear you.

All Holy is your name.

Mary bore a son of David's line, a king whose reign would never end. Bless [... and] all the nations of the world with Christ's gift of peace. Lord, have mercy on those who fear you.

All Holy is your name.

The child Jesus grew in wisdom and stature in the home of Mary and Joseph. Strengthen our homes and families, and keep under your protection [... and] all those whom we love.

Lord, have mercy on those who fear you.

All Holy is your name.

At the foot of the cross of Christ stood his mother, and from the cross she received his lifeless body in her arms. Give comfort and healing to [... and] all who suffer and all who watch the suffering of those they love.

Lord, have mercy on those who fear you.

All Holy is your name.

The apostle John saw a vision of a woman in heaven, robed with the sun. Bring us with [... and] all those who have died in the faith of Christ to share the joy of heaven with Mary and all the saints.

Lord, have mercy on those who fear you.

All Holy is your name.

Almighty and everlasting God, your handmaid Mary magnified your name and rejoiced in your saving love: trusting in that same love, we ask all these our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All **And also with you.**

HYMN 3 [Lord, I lift your name on high](#) (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 the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

HYMN 4 [Ubi caritas](#) (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, almighty Father, ever-living God,
to proclaim the wonders you have worked in all your saints,
and on this feast of Mary, ever blessed,
to echo her praise of your loving kindness.

For you have truly done great things
and holy is your name,
and your mercy is on those who fear you
in every generation.

When you looked with favour on your lowly servant
you remembered your promise of mercy
and gave the world through her
your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Through him the hosts of heaven adore you
and rejoice in your presence for ever.

May our voices join with theirs
in the triumphant hymn of praise:

**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 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

Lord 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.