

Waiting, Watching, Wondering

8 December

An Advent to Epiphany Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney



Mary's Fiat by PaperMonastery -fiat means let it be done (Luke 1:38)

Luke 1:26-38

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.



To ponder

Today, 8th December is the day we remember the Conception of Mary, Mother of the Lord. It is a festival celebrated in both the eastern and western church on the same day. The feast acknowledges the preparation by God of his people to receive their Saviour and Lord, putting 'heaven in ordinary' and showing that mortal flesh can indeed bring Christ to the world.

Today's reading is the Annunciation- Mary says yes, which took courage and bravery, she is a young woman prepared to ask questions of Gabriel and say yes to God. This yes to God comes from Mary's faith in God, her knowledge of God's promise to Israel, trusting that God will meet her with grace, help and protection as she says yes. Mary's yes, faith and trust in God continued through her life, through her life with God incarnate who she would bear, love, watch grown up and watch die on a cross. The visit from the Angel Gabriel and its implications were not part of Mary's plans but she was prepared, in faith and trust, to serve God in the way she was asked, and God carried her through the unexpected.

The Collect for the Conception of Mary, Mother of the Lord

Almighty and everlasting God, who stooped to raise fallen humanity through the child-bearing of blessed Mary: grant that we, who have seen your glory revealed in our human nature and your love made perfect in our weakness, may daily be renewed in your image and conformed to the pattern of your Son 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.

Theotokos by Malcolm Guite

You bore for me the One who came to bless
And bear for all and make the broken whole.
You heard His call and in your open 'yes'
You spoke aloud for every living soul.
Oh gracious Lady, child of your own child,
Whose mother-love still calls the child in me,
Call me again, for I am lost, and wild
Waves surround me now. On this dark sea
Shine as a star and call me to the shore.
Open the door that all my sins would close
And hold me in your garden. Let me share
The prayer that folds the petals of the Rose.
Enfold me too in Love's last mystery
And bring me to the One you bore for me.

To listen to

I Sing of a Maiden by Russell Pascoe, performed by Truro Cathedral Choir

<https://open.spotify.com/track/37hyCfKbAcOrbUfSiGbude?si=89db5cd14f3b46c5>

The Rose by Ola Gjeilo, performed by Choir of Royal Holloway London and 12 Ensemble

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ph44oJ7WpGU>

