

[Spirituality](#)

[Pencil Preaching](#)



by Pat Marrin

[View Author Profile](#)

[patrickjmarrin@gmail.com](mailto:patrickjmarrin@gmail.com).

## [\*\*Join the Conversation\*\*](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

March 24, 2020

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)



“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord” (Luke 1:38).

### **The Annunciation of the Lord**

*Isa 7:10-14; 8:10; Heb 10:4-10; Luke 1:26-38*

The mystery of the Incarnation is inseparable from the mystery of the Annunciation. Without Mary’s consent, the overshadowing Holy Spirit would not have conceived Jesus in her womb. The Word would not have become flesh in her. But the way this encounter took place was not just about divine courtesy waiting on her “yes.” It was also about the importance of human freedom. If Mary had not been free to say “no,” our rescue from sin and death would have been imposed instead of what it was -- a love story.

The word “behold” is used three times in this Gospel. The angel Gabriel says it before explaining what is about to happen. He says it again when revealing that Elizabeth is pregnant. The word signals the enormity of the news, the miraculous nature of the grace in motion as God’s plan unfolds. So far it has been all God. But the dialogue is complete only when Mary speaks, giving her consent: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to your word.”

Luke’s narrative is a simple, layered masterpiece, invoking creation in the hovering spirit, woman’s role in the fall, history sent in a wide circuit away from God then back again through the patriarchs and prophets toward the promise of salvation. Mary restores the circle of life by her yes to divine and human atonement, history’s homecoming in the child in her womb.

Mary, Mother of God, finds her vocation as a servant, a handmaid alert to the slightest gesture of her mistress's hand. For a second time, the finger of God crosses the infinite and timeless expanse between Spirit and matter, entering time and space to heal a broken world, imperceptible to all except the eye of this handmaid, so attuned was Mary to God's will.

Everything is different as Good News races throughout the universe, a song resounding in every corner of creation, announcing within the DNA of all living things that a different destiny is possible for those who say yes to the fullness of grace revealed in Mary and now available to everyone. The Word of God comes to all of us, and if we say yes, becomes flesh in us, is born again in us for the sake of the world.

We have rarely known a time when the world was as eager to begin again as it is now, to make a fresh start with new wisdom borne of fear and suffering. Yet God has always invited us to renew ourselves, to begin again, to leave behind our faults, both sad and happy, to ask forgiveness for our sins and for the life-giving breath of the Holy Spirit.

Together we pray: *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the Earth.*

Advertisement