Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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“Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you” (Luke 1:27).

Is 7:10-14; Lk 1:26-38

In the 15th century fresco of the Annunciation by Fr. Angelico, Mary has a small book on her lap. The painting suggests that at the time of the angel’s visitation, Mary is in

prayer while reading the Scriptures. Perhaps the text she is meditating on is today's first reading, Isaiah 7:10-14. When Mary reads that a "virgin will conceive and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel," she realizes that this word is about her.

In that instant, Mary's encounter with this Word is so intimate that it becomes flesh in her. She conceives in her womb what faith tells her is God's will for her. She consents. "Let it be done unto me according to your word."

Isn't this what is supposed to happen when we pray? Or when a passage of Scripture seems to "light up" when we read it? God is speaking to us, both in our hearts and in the reality of our lives. Make this Word come true. Speak it in the way you live. Let others see the Word made flesh in you.

Christmas is meant to come true in this way for each of us. At our baptism, we became dwelling places of the Spirit of God, the same Spirit that overshadowed Mary at the Annunciation. In that first sacrament of initiation, we were united to the body of Christ. At every Eucharist we grow more and more like Christ by sharing his Spirit, Body and Blood. We take up the mission of Christ, for we are his body in the world.

Christmas is a date on the calendar that will come and go, but the reality of Christ in our lives is meant to grow and deepen. Let us embrace the mystery and hear the Word intimately, as Mary did. Be it done unto us according to the Word.