

# Taking Our Hearts to the Lord

Scripture Sharing Group Resource, Advent 2023, Week 4

**Reader 1:** A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke (Lk 1:26-38)

*"I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me."*

The Angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her "Rejoice so highly favoured. The Lord is with you". She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid. You have won God's favour. Listen, you are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the house of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end. Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?" "The Holy Spirit will come upon you" the angel answered "and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God". "I am the handmaid of the Lord" said Mary "let what you have said be done to me". And the angel left her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

*Silence*

**Leader:** Let us read the Gospel passage aloud together.

**Everyone:** A Reading from the Holy Gospel ....

*Silence*

**Leader:** Let us listen to a short reflection on this Gospel passage.

## **Reader 2: Reflection on the Gospel**

More than likely we are all accustomed to women and men making sacrifices for a greater good. Think for example of the selfless parent or grandparent, the teacher who goes the extra mile, the nurse or doctor who gives more time than they are contracted to work, the priest who befriends those most in need of pastoral care.

But might there be another level of self-giving, a level contingent on a high degree of trust, of risk-taking and of stepping into the unknown?

Tradition suggests that when the Angel Gabriel visited Mary both her parents were deceased and her betrothal to Joseph incomplete. To conceive a child out of wedlock was no minor matter ... and yet Mary was accepting and placed her trust in God.

Was her fiat, her yes to God, underpinned by a past personal encounter or encounters with God, leading her to feel interiorly that all would be ok? Would she have said yes without knowing the Lord in whom she placed her trust?

Lord, as we hasten toward Christmas help us to know you as Mary did, and, like her, to place all our trust in you. Let us not be fearful of what you ask of us, but open to stepping into the unknown. Amen.

*Silence*

**Leader:** I invite you to share any thought or consideration prompted by the Gospel passage and /or the reflection.

*Sharing*

**Leader:** Let us return to our Advent Prayer.

*Group returns to page 44 of Advent booklet.*