



**FROM THE VICAR
ON THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION**

Dear Friends,

As we face a time, when 'normal' life is on hold, the liturgical cycle of the Church continues. Today we celebrate with great joy The Annunciation of the Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary that great day of decision: Mary's 'yes to God', her acceptance of her role in his plan of redemption.

With this message comes:

The Collect and readings for today

A Homily

A short reflection by Paula on the painting 'The Annunciation' by Fra Filippo Lippi.

May the prayers and example of Our Lady of Walsingham renew us in hope and courage in these challenging times.

Father Robert

The Collect

We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that, as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First reading

Isaiah 7:10-14,8:10

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No,' Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.'

Then he said:

Listen now, House of David:
are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men
without trying the patience of my God, too?

The Lord himself, therefore,
will give you a sign.

It is this: the maiden is with child
and will soon give birth to a son
whom she will call Immanuel,
a name which means 'God is with us.'

Second reading

Hebrews 10:4-10

Bulls' blood and goats' blood are useless for taking away sins, and this is what Christ said, on coming into the world:

*You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,
prepared a body for me.
You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin;
then I said,
just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book,
'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.'*

Notice that he says first: *You did not* want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: *the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin*, and you took no pleasure in them; and then he says: *Here I am! I am coming to obey your will*. He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. And this *will* was for us to be made holy by the *offering* of his *body* made once and for all by Jesus Christ.

Gospel

Luke 1:26-38

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 will 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.