

Wednesday Worship
24th March 2021
The Annunciation

Opening words and lighting of a candle

Let us adore the Lord,
Maker of marvellous works,
Bright heaven with its angels,
And on earth the white-waved sea.

(Old Irish)

May our purpose be strong:
To strive for what is fittest.
Let us all love Jesus,
For this is the highest thing.

(From Feilire Oengusso)

All Bless to us, O God
Each thing our eyes see

All Bless to us, O God,
Each sound our ears hear

All Bless to us, O God
Each odour that goes to our nostrils

All Bless to us, O God,
Each taste that goes to our lips,
Each note that goes to our song
Each ray that guides our way
Each thing that we pursue.
The zeal that seeks our living souls
The Three that seek our hearts.

Hymn: Meekness and majesty

Ist Reading: Wisdom 9.1-12

'O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy, who have made all things by your word, and by your wisdom have formed humankind to have dominion over the creatures you have made, and rule the world in holiness and righteousness, and pronounce judgement in uprightness of soul, give me the wisdom that sits by your throne, and do not reject me from among your servants. For I am your servant, the son of your servant-girl, a man who is weak and short-lived, with little understanding of judgement and laws; for even one who is perfect among human beings will be regarded as nothing without the wisdom that comes from you. You have chosen me to be king of your people and to be judge over your sons and daughters. You have given command to build a temple on your holy mountain, and an altar in the city of your habitation, a copy of the holy tent that you prepared from the beginning. With you is wisdom, she who knows your works and was present when you made the

world; she understands what is pleasing in your sight and what is right according to your commandments. Send her forth from the holy heavens, and from the throne of your glory send her, that she may labour at my side, and that I may learn what is pleasing to you. For she knows and understands all things, and she will guide me wisely in my actions and guard me with her glory. Then my works will be acceptable, and I shall judge your people justly, and shall be worthy of the throne of my father.

Prayer of response

Lord, source and giver of all wisdom.
Grant us the gift you gave Solomon
of wisdom to know and do what is good in your eyes.

All **Amen.**

Psalm 85

Lord, you were favourable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin.
You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.
Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation towards us.
Will you be angry with us for ever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?
Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.
Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.
Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.

Prayer of response

Most holy God,
when we come to you fearing that truth condemns us,
show us that truth is one with love in your Word made flesh,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

All **Amen.**

2nd Reading: Galatians 4.1-5

My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Prayer of response

Heavenly Father,
we give you thanks that,
through the faith and obedience of Mary,
your Son has come into the world
and made us your children with him.
May we always remember our inheritance in your kingdom.

All **Amen.**

Hymn: For Mary, mother of our Lord

God of all

Our God is the God of all,
The God of heaven and earth,
Of the sea and of the rivers;
The God of the sun and of the moon and of all the stars;
The God of the lofty mountains
and of the lowly valleys.
He has His dwelling around heaven and earth,
and sea, and all that in them is.
He inspires all,
He gives life to all,
He dominates all,
He supports all.

He lights the light of the sun.
He furnishes the light of the night.
He has made springs in dry land . . .
He is the God of heaven and earth,
of sea and rivers,
of sun, moon and stars,
of the lofty mountain and the lowly valley,
the God above heaven,
and in heaven,
and under heaven.

Reflection

The meditation of Mary, mother of Jesus (Nick Fawcett)

'You've got it wrong,' I told him.

'You can't mean me,
no way!

Someone else perhaps,
more worthy,
more important,
but not me!'

Honestly, what did I have to commend me?

No connections or special qualities,
nothing –

just an ordinary girl from Nazareth,
so what could God see in me?

But it was academic anyway, for I wasn't even married yet,
and there was no way I'd sleep with Joseph until I was.

So I came out with it straight,

'Sorry, but you're wrong!'

Only he wouldn't take no for an answer.

Just stood there smiling,
unruffled;

and before I knew it he was off again –
the message even more fantastic than before:

God's power overshadowing me,
a child born of the Holy Spirit,
the Son of God!

It was way over the top,
and I should have turned him out there and then,
but I was flummoxed,
too amazed to reply.

Even when I found my tongue it wasn't much use to me –
my mind so befuddled with questions

that I ended up saying, of all things,
'Here am I, the servant of the Lord,
let it be with me according to your word.'

Oh, it sounded good, granted –
the epitome of humility –
but if you only knew what I was thinking,
you'd have a different picture then.

So what got into me, you ask?

How could I be so meek and accepting?

Well, what choice did I have, let's be honest,
for as the angel said, 'With God, nothing will be impossible.'

How could I argue with that?

There was no way out, was there?

But it's one thing to accept that in principle,
another when it turns your life upside down.

Do I believe it?

Well, I didn't at the time,

but I do now,
for I've just discovered I'm pregnant,
and I say this perfectly reverently, God knows how!
It's astonishing and terrifying,
exciting yet mystifying,
my mind in turmoil, not quite sure what to think any more.
But one thing is plain now,
beyond all question –
with God, quite clearly, nothing is impossible!

Prayer

Gracious God,
you may not ask of us what you asked of Mary,
but nonetheless your challenge invariably comes,
calling us to avenues of service
which we would never imagine possible.
Whoever we are, we all have a part to play in your purposes,
a unique role in making real the love of Christ
here on earth, here and now.
Help us never to underestimate your sovereign power.
Grant us the humility we need to hear your voice
and the faith we need to respond.
Like Mary, let us be ready to answer when you call:
'Here am I, the servant of the Lord;
let it be to me according to your word.'
All this we ask, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Intercessions

In obedience to the angel's message,
Mary accepted her role in God's salvation.
Filled with confidence, let us pray.

You chose the Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son.
Have mercy on all who wait for your redemption.
We pray for your Church through all the world.
Make us steadfast in hope, abounding in love,
and ever growing in wisdom.
Lord, hear your people

All **and answer our prayers.**

Through the angel Gabriel
you brought a message of peace and joy to Mary.
Give to the world the joy and peace of salvation.
We pray for peace between nations and peoples.
For an end to injustice, prejudice and discrimination.
And for peace in our homes and communities.
Lord, hear your people

All **and answer our prayers.**

By the consent of your handmaid and the power of the Holy Spirit,
your Word came to dwell among us.
Open our hearts to receive Christ,
as Mary the Virgin received him.

Lord, hear your people
All and answer our prayers.

You look with compassion on the lowly and fill the hungry with good things.
Encourage the downhearted, help all those in need
and comfort those near to death.

We pray for the sick, the suffering, the anxious and the helpless.
Lord, hear your people
All and answer our prayers.

To you, O God, nothing is impossible, and you alone do marvellous things;
save us, and bring us on the last day
with Mary and all the faithful departed
into your glorious kingdom.

Lord, hear your people
All and answer our prayers.

Grant, O Lord, that by the riches of your grace
we may grow up into him who unites our life to yours,
even he who is the first-born of all creation,
your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All Amen.

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
let us pray as our Saviour taught us

All Our Father, who art in heaven...

Hymn: Praise to the holiest in the height

Closing prayers

Father of all,
you have given us your Son to be the Saviour of the world.
Welcome us your children into your kingdom
to enjoy your presence now and for ever.

All Amen.

Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary,
revealed in his glory,
worshipped by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed in throughout the world,
exalted to the highest heavens.
Blessed be God our strength and our salvation
now and for ever.

All Amen.

And the blessing...