

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Dec 8th 2017

Fri. 8th Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. First Reading: Gen 3:9-15, 20 Responsorial Psalm: Ps 98:1-4 Gospel Reading: Lk 1:26-38

Mary received Gabriel's visit unexpectedly. She was upset, says the gospel, thinking what that greeting might mean. But the angel had already said to her "you the one full of grace" and "the Lord is with you!" The greeting says clearly that Mary is the person God has chosen with a precise purpose, involving her. God's plans are eternal; they embrace all creation, all history, all creatures. Now God's design is a project of grace, of love and thus of forgiveness.

Today's first lesson begins with how the Bible describes the sun. Every sun follows the pattern of the original sun. Adam and Eve thought they had an opportunity to be "like God"; to come beyond the way they had been made by God. They found that God's will was a limit for them, an obstacle they could easily overcome. They meant that doing what God ordained would diminish human freedom and dignity. On the contrary, Mary simply lets God's will determine all her life. Saying "I am the servant of the Lord, let it be unto me according to your word." She makes her life be an instrument in God's design. All her life will be the needed collaboration for God to become man, and so humanity become divine.

With his sin Adam lost his confidence with God; he suddenly found himself nude, he became aware of human frailty. Mary however, acknowledging herself as the servant of the Lord, permitted God to become man, so that a unique human person, her son, became God and man alike.

Today's feast, the Immaculate Conception recalls the fact that Mary was indeed the servant of the Lord, serving with soul and body God's plan of redemption for humanity. God's eternal Word became flesh in Mary, so could then inhabit in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, so that we would also become God's children and co-workers in his work of salvation.

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