

# The Annunciation

Sources: Luke 1, 1-80 / Luke 2, 1-7 / Matthew 1, 18-24



Introduction: For a long, long time, the people of Israel have waited for a king who will save them. The Israelites, in fact, are not free: they must obey another people, the Romans. And so God sends them a Savior...



Here is Zechariah: he is in the big hall in the Temple.



Not everyone is allowed inside this hall.



Only the priests may enter. Here the priests pray to God and offer sacrifices. Zechariah is a priest: it's his turn today to offer a sacrifice to God.



In the hall seven golden lamps are burning.



*There is also an urn which holds burning coals. Zechariah is throwing little bits of incense into the coals: these bits of incense will burn and give off a wonderful smell...*



Zechariah prays. But, suddenly... he becomes frightened! What is happening?



He sees a man in an outfit full of light standing close to him. It's not an ordinary man; it's an angel of God.



"I've come to tell you something beautiful: you will have a son! God has listened to your prayer: your wife Elizabeth will give you a son



and you will call him 'John'. His birth will give you great joy and many will be happy because of it. God has great plans for him: he will help many people become friends of God, and he will prepare them to welcome the Savior.



Zechariah is amazed, without words. Then, doubtful, he says: "But Elizabeth and I are already too old to have a child. This is not possible. I can't believe it."

*Who can imagine the joy that Mary had?*



“But it will happen,” says the angel, “I am Gabriel, the angel who stays close to the throne of God. God himself sent me to you to tell you this joyous news, and since you have not believed me, you will not be able to speak until your little baby John is born”.



Having said this, suddenly the angel disappears. When his time to serve in the Temple is finished, Zechariah goes home. But he doesn't have a voice anymore; he cannot speak... and all the people are amazed.



The angel Gabriel also appears to a young girl named Mary...



... who lives in Nazareth and who is engaged to a certain man named Joseph.



He enters into her small room and says: “I greet you, Mary. The Lord is with you. You will have a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be the Savior for whom the people of Israel have been waiting for such a long time. You will be the mother of the Son of God”.

*She will have a son, and he will be the Son of God...*



Mary is surprised and asks: “How can this happen? I am not married...”. “Also your cousin Elizabeth and her husband will have a baby,” the angel continues- “Everyone thought that they could not have children. Instead she is already in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible for God”.



Mary believes everything the angel tells her: “I am ready to do what He wants from me.”



Mary does nothing except think about the message of the angel. Elizabeth, too, will be so happy!!! But Elizabeth is already old. What if she has no one to help her? Mary thinks: “I'll leave immediately, I'll go help Elizabeth.”



Elizabeth is full of joy when she sees Mary arrive and she exclaims: “God has blessed you more than all other women, and Blessed is the baby that you will have! How is it that the mother of my Lord has come to visit me?” The baby in her womb also jumps for joy! Now she knows that Mary has been chosen to be the Mother of the Savior. Mary and Elizabeth are very happy and hug each other and together they praise God for the wonders of His Love! And so Mary says: “Great is the Lord: I want to praise Him. God is my Savior: I am full of joy!”



Shortly afterward the little baby John is born. How happy Elizabeth is with her son in her arms! Her relatives and neighbors come to rejoice with her and Zechariah, and also, naturally, to see the baby. "What will you name him?" they ask: they expect that he will be named after his father. To their great surprise, however, Elizabeth says that the name of the baby will be John!



"But none of your relatives are named John," they answer. So they ask Zechariah: he would answer willingly, but he cannot speak. So he takes a tablet and writes: "His name is John".



And immediately afterward, Zechariah can speak again. How happy he is and how thankful to God!



All of their neighbors are full of a sense of wonder and they say: "Who knows who this baby will be?"



Zechariah begins to praise God: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel..." The Lord has remembered his people. Jesus, the Savior is about to arrive!



"And you, my son," Zechariah sings, "Will become a prophet of the Most High God: you will go before the Lord and prepare his way. And you will tell His People that God will save them and pardon their sins".



Now John is grown; for many years he has lived in the desert, to prepare himself for the task that God has entrusted to him: to announce the arrival of Jesus, the Savior of the people of Israel.



Chiara: "Let's always say yes to God like Mary did!"



*What does Chiara say to us gen 4??*

*Chiara invites us to always say yes, like Mary. At times it seems clear that we should say yes and maybe we say yes with joy. Other times it is more difficult to say yes... shall we talk about one of our experiences?*



## ... and her mother smiled

(Delfina of Fontem - Africa)



Fontem is an African city in the midst of a tropical forest where everyone tries to live the way Jesus wants us to. It is 6 o'clock in the morning.



Delfina, a gen 4, has just awakened; she opens the little curtain of the window and sees her mother go off to the market. She yawns a wide yawn and says: "Jesus, today I want to make you happy."



She washes, gets dressed and runs to Pierre, her little brother, but Pierre is still sleeping.



As she goes into the kitchen to eat breakfast, she sees the broom in a corner. "I could sweep the



kitchen," Delfina thinks, "so mom won't have to do it when she gets back".



As she is sweeping, her mother comes in with the shopping. She smiles and gives Delfina a banana which she likes very much.

## I said yes!

(Mark of Genoa - Italy)



Today Mark wakes up with a tooth that's a little sore. He gets up and goes into the kitchen. His mother is preparing breakfast. Mark says: "Mom, today I can't go to kindergarten. My tooth hurts!"



"Let me see" his mother says. She looks at it and says: "It's not something very bad. I will phone the dentist today to ask when we can go see him."



Then she takes a pill from the medicine cabinet and gives it to Mark: "You'll see. The pain will go away immediately! Go ahead, get ready for kindergarten!"



But that morning Mark really doesn't want to go: "No! I don't want to go; I want to stay home!" His mother looks sad.



So Mark thinks: "But, yes, I will go. It will make mom happy!" and he goes into the bathroom to wash up.



He gets dressed, eats breakfast and runs to kindergarten. Mark is happy because he said "Yes" and he saw that his mother was happy.



As soon as he arrives at school, his tooth doesn't hurt anymore and he runs off to play with Daniel and Catherine and all the other children.



Chiara: "Let's always say yes to God as Mary did!"