

Reflection Friday 3rd Week Lent 2022 The Annunciation

*Abridged from Universalis: **Could Mary have said No?***

It would be demeaning of her if Mary could not have said No. She was a free human being like each of us. The glory of the Annunciation is that Mary, the second Eve, could have said No to God *but said Yes instead*. This is what we celebrate and why we give her praise.

Mary could have said No to Gabriel and it is worth pondering on what this could have meant for us if she had. However, given the genealogies and prophecies in the Bible, there was only one candidate. Ultimately, of course, God would have done something: the history of salvation is the history of God never abandoning his people however pig-headed they were. God chose to work through human history. This offer of redemption took four thousand years of preparation, from the Fall to the Annunciation.

Faced with the enormity of her choice, how was Mary able to decide? If she said No, unredeemed generations would continue to toil under the burden of sin. If she said Yes, she herself would suffer, and so would her Son; but both would be glorified. Millions of people yet unborn would have Heaven open to them; but millions of others would suffer oppression and death in her son's name.

Wouldn't God want Mary's full and informed consent as the representative of humanity? Two great miracles of the Annunciation are: God gave Mary the wisdom to grasp the importance of her decision, and, God gave her the grace not to be overwhelmed by it.

The Annunciation helps us see how God's grace can give us the strength to make the right decision. After all, God does not demand that our decisions be correct, only that they be rightly made.

The Annunciation also teaches that having created heaven and earth, the sun and all the stars, the Almighty Father, the Omnipotent and Omniscient one, so often comes to one of his poor, weak creatures and asks for help. And, day after day, he keeps on asking!!