Eucharistic Reflections on the Incarnation for the Advent and Christmas Seasons
The Annunciation
Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin’s name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, “Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.” But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there will be no end.” But Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?” And the angel said to her in reply, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God.” Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.
Reflection Questions

- The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and greeted her with the word: “Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you!”
- How do you feel when “the Lord is with you,” present before you in the Eucharist at Mass or in Adoration?
- Relate to Jesus what you are thinking and feeling and then write down some thoughts.

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“Lord, I believe; help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24)
The Visitation

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.” And Mary said:

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm, he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has come to the help of his servant Israel for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children forever.
Reflection Questions

- The Angel Gabriel tells Mary about her cousin Elizabeth and Mary goes with haste to visit her and recounts the many great works the Lord has done for her and all of mankind.
- As you sit before Jesus in the Holy Eucharist during Mass or in Adoration, share with Him the great things you recognize that He has done in your life. What might your prayer of praise and thanksgiving look like?
- Write some of those thoughts down.

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Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. (Psalm 136:1)
The Birth of Jesus
Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.
Reflection Questions

- Mary gave birth to the Creator and Redeemer of the world in a stable because there was no room at the inn. As you pray before the same Creator and Redeemer of the world now present in the Holy Eucharist, is there room in your home for Him?
- Is it possible to gaze at Jesus in the Eucharist as Mary and Joseph would have gazed upon Him with love. How might He be asking you to make room in your heart for Him?
- Share these thoughts and feelings with Him and then write some of them down.

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Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. (Revelations 3:20)
The Shepherds Visit the Stable
Luke 2:8-20

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.
Reflection Questions

- The shepherds were considered the lowest class and insignificant in society, yet they are the first, after Mary and Joseph, to see the Messiah.
- Have you ever felt helpless or insignificant? Consider how in a similar way Jesus has made Himself helpless and available to you now hidden beneath the form of bread.
- Relate these experiences to Jesus here before you in the Eucharist and imagine you are looking at Him in the manager at Bethlehem.
- Write down some of your thoughts.

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Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you.
(James 4:10)
Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, awaiting the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord. He came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform the custom of the law in regard to him, he took him into his arms and blessed God, saying: “Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you prepared in sight of all the peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and glory for your people Israel.” The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to
God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

**Reflection Questions**

- Simeon and Anna recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah, the Son of God who redeems us from our sin. Why were they able to recognize Him so quickly in His human form?
- Are you able to recognize Jesus present in your life? Ask Him how you might know Him more readily in the Eucharist.
- Write down some of your reflections.

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“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” (John 20:29)
When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him,

“In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.’”

Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star’s appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.” After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the
star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Reflection Questions

- A star and a promise led the wise men to Jesus. Our Lady is also referred to as the “Star of David” because her only desire is to point us to Jesus.
- As you sit before Jesus in the Eucharist ponder how Mary is that star leading us to her Son. What greater gift could you give to Jesus lying in the manger, than your presence and loving attention right now? Ponder how He wants to have us near and to fill us with an ocean of peace and true joy.
- Write down some of your thoughts.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
(Matthew 6:21)
The Flight Into Egypt
Matthew 2:13-15

When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.”

Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt.

He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

Reflection Questions

- Joseph rose and took his family to an unknown land because the Lord sent him a message to do so. This might remind us of the call of Abraham who responded in a similar way. (Genesis 12:1)
- Though we may not always understand the Lord’s plan and the mystery that surrounds the call we each have to holiness, we are asked to respond with faith and trust in the promise He gave to take care of us always.
- Ponder the mystery of Jesus’ Presence in the Eucharist. Ask Him to increase your faith and your ability to respond to what He might be calling you to do.
- Write down some of your thoughts

Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. (Genesis 12:1-2)
Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, “Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.” And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God and man.
Reflection Questions

- Mary asks Jesus: “Why have you treated us so?” Jesus responds by asking Mary and Joseph the question: “How is it that you sought me?
- Perhaps you can share a time with Jesus when you’ve asked or wanted to ask Him Mary’s question: “why have you done this to us?”
- As you sit before Him in the Eucharist, let Him know that you are also seeking Him.
- Write down some of your thoughts.

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For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)
Prayer Before Mass

Almighty eternal God, behold, I come to the Sacrament of your Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as one sick to the physician of life, as one unclean to the fountain of mercy, as one blind to the light of eternal brightness, as one poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth.

I ask, therefore, for the abundance of your immense generosity, that you may graciously cure my sickness, wash away my defilement, give light to my blindness, enrich my poverty, clothe my nakedness, so that I may receive the bread of Angels, the King of kings and Lord of lords, with such reverence and humility, such contrition and devotion, such purity and faith, such purpose and intention as are conducive to the salvation of my soul.

Grant, I pray, that I may receive not only the Sacrament of the Lord’s Body and Blood, but also the reality and power of that Sacrament. O most gentle God, grant that I may so receive the Body of your Only Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, which he took from the Virgin Mary, that I may be made worthy to be incorporated into his Mystical Body and to be counted among its members.

O most loving Father, grant that I may at last gaze forever upon the unveiled face of your beloved Son, whom I, a wayfarer, propose to receive now veiled under these species. Who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever, Amen.
Thanksgiving After Communion

I give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, who have been pleased to nourish me, a sinner and your unworthy servant, with the precious Body and Blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: this through no merits of mine, but due solely to the graciousness of your mercy. And I pray that this Holy Communion may not be for me an offense to be punished, but a saving plea for forgiveness.

May it be for me the armor of faith, and the shield of good will. May it cancel my faults, destroy concupiscence and carnal passion, increase charity and patience, humility and obedience and all the virtues, may it be a firm defense against the snares of all my enemies, both visible and Invisible, the complete calming of my impulses, both of the flesh and of the spirit, a firm adherence to you, the one true God, and the joyful completion of my life’s course. And I beseech you to lead me, a sinner, to that banquet beyond all telling, where with your Son and the Holy Spirit you are the true light of your Saints, fullness of satisfied desire, eternal gladness, consummate delight and perfect happiness.

Through Christ our Lord, Amen

(Prayers Written by St. Thomas Aquinas)
Prayer of Reparation

My God, I believe, I adore, I hope and I love You! I beg pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not hope, and do not love You.

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I adore You profoundly. I offer You the most precious Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world. In reparation for the outrages, sacrileges and indifference by which He is offended. And, through the infinite merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg of You the conversion of sinners.

Prayers given to the children at Fatima by the Angel of Portugal in 1916 in preparation for Mary’s apparitions. There was a Eucharistic host and chalice suspended in the air, and the angel, kneeling, led them in this prayer.

The Divine Mercy

“All grace flows from mercy, and the last hour abounds with mercy for us. Let no one doubt concerning the goodness of God; even if a person’s sins were as dark as night, God’s mercy is stronger than our misery. One thing alone is necessary; that the sinner set ajar the door of his heart, be it ever so little, to let in a ray of God’s merciful grace, and then God will do the rest.”

-Sister Mary Faustina Kowalska