



Daily Reflections

*"I think that if millions of children pray the Rosary,
the world will change."*

-Padre Pio-

Day 1 - Daily Decade Reflection

The Annunciation

The experiences of giving and receiving love can be some of the greatest things in our lives. In the story of the Annunciation, the Angel Gabriel visits Mary to tell her about God's plan for her life and for St Joseph's life too. The Angel Gabriel told Mary that she would become pregnant, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and give birth to a Son who she must name Jesus. Mary, although puzzled by the announcement, says yes and agrees to God's plan and says *"be it done unto me according to thy Word"*.

By Mary saying 'yes', and through Jesus, God became human and God's plan to save the world became possible. The Annunciation shows God's never-ending love for us, and Mary's faith, obedience, humility and love for God. It also *"shows us what is possible when we allow our lives to be shaped by God's" love.*

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, reminds us that none of us can live without love and we are all God's beloved children. God does not make a list of demands that we must meet before he will love us; God does not do this because we cannot earn God's love. Instead, God is always the first to show his love for us because He loves us exactly as we are.

See General Audience of 14 June 2017 | Francis (vatican.va)

See March 25th - The Annunciation of the Lord - The Dominican Friars in Britain (op.org)

Prayer Intention for today

We pray for the Church in Syria, for all our 'project partners', and for families living in Syria or living as refugees in Lebanon.

We remember all those who have been suffering the effects of fighting in Syria for many years, and for the children who have grown up in the middle of conflict. We pray for their safety and for all those who bring help.

Day 2 - Daily Decade Reflection

The Visitation

After hearing the Angel's news, Our Lady carries the baby Jesus in her womb "with haste" into the "hill country" to visit her cousin Elizabeth, (Luke 1:39-56 RSV CE). Elizabeth lives in the 'hill country' - a journey that would take four to five days' probably - and is pregnant with John the Baptist.

Why would Mary rush to visit her elderly cousin after agreeing to become the Mother of Jesus, the Son of the Most High, and the Saviour of the world? Why would Mary do this?

Like Our Mother, Mary, God calls us to serve him too. As Pope Francis said in his homily during his pilgrimage to Fatima, "*God created us to be a source of hope for others*". By making the journey to visit her cousin, Mary's act of kindness is both a corporal and a spiritual work of mercy. She was bringing the hope of the new life inside her, to her cousin Elizabeth.

To go on pilgrimage means to travel to a place to meet God. This place is very special and important because lots of other people have met God there before. We know that this is true, because God's love and mercy has changed people's hearts and helped them to serve God and to be kind to everyone they meet. Christians go on pilgrimage to places such as the Holy Land to visit the places where Our Lord, Jesus, lived, performed miracles, died and rose again.

See: *Second Joyful Mystery: The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth - The Dominican Friars in Britain (op.org)*

The Visitation Luke 1: 39-56 - The Dominican Friars in Britain (op.org)

Pilgrimage to Fátima: Holy Mass and rite of Canonization of Blesseds Francisco Marto and Jacinta Marto (square in front of the Shrine of Our Lady of Fátima, 13 May 2017) | Francis (vatican.va)

Prayer Intention for today

We pray for the Church in Nigeria, especially in the Diocese of Maiduguri, and for families living in camps to escape attacks from those trying to hurt them. Both Christian and Muslim communities have been under attack - we pray for peace and safety for all.

Day 3 - Daily Decade Reflection

The Nativity

“And while they were there the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” (*Luke 2:6-7 RSV CE*)

As Mary reflected on those who came to visit her son – the Shepherds and the Wise Men, the lowly and the rich, the Jew and the Gentile – could she have imagined that one day peoples of every nation would gather together in the name of her son?

Third Joyful Mystery: The Nativity - The Dominican Friars in Britain (op.org)

That night at the birth of Jesus, the One who had nowhere to go; is publicly announced to those who were also outsiders. The shepherds are the first to hear this Good News.

Yet to them the angel says: “Do not be afraid; for see I am bringing you good news of great joy for the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (Lk 2:10-11).

This is the same Good News that we are called to share, to celebrate and to shout loudly about it. In the story of Nativity, the Child of Bethlehem, God comes to meet us and share in our lives. He offers himself to us, so that we can take him into our arms, embrace him and get to know Him. In this Child, God invites us to be messengers of hope and kindness.

See: What Kind of People Were The Shepherds? Why Did God Choose Them? (catholic-link.org)

Holy Mass on the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (24 December 2017) | Francis (vatican.va)

Prayer Intention for today

We pray for the children, young people and mothers of Syria, that the war in the north of the country will end and the economic crisis will be lifted.

We pray that families will be reunited, and that the issues of poverty and hunger will be resolved.

Day 4 - Daily Decade Reflection

The Presentation

According to Jewish law, all firstborn children must be presented to the Lord (Ex 13:2), recalling the Passover and Israel's liberation from Egypt; secondly, the story of Samuel (1 Sam 1 - 2), where Samuel is consecrated to the Lord, welcomed by the priest Eli at Shiloh, as Jesus is welcomed in the Jerusalem Temple by Simeon



The Temple represented a holy meeting point; it was the best place for Jews, living at the time of Jesus, to go to meet God to renew their friendship with Him.

Mary and Joseph presented Jesus to God in the Temple forty days after his birth, according to Jewish law. Through the presentation ceremony, Mary and Joseph promised that Jesus would serve the Lord during his lifetime.

Jesus had come to save the whole world by leading all people – Jewish and non-Jewish, often called Gentiles - by the light of the truth, and ultimately, through his death on the cross and resurrection. Through his resurrection, Jesus is alive with us too. Jesus' presentation in the Temple shows clearly that God was with them and he is with us too; he dwells among us.

See: *Fourth Joyful Mystery: The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple - The Dominican Friars in Britain (op.org)*

Prayer Intention for today

We pray for children, young people and mothers in Nigeria that they will feel the strength of our love and concern as we support them in both our prayers and our aid projects. We pray that children there may one day be able to feel safe, go to school and play at home, just like we do here. Amen.

Day 5 - Daily Decade Reflection

The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple

Every year, Mary and Joseph attended the feast of the Passover where people gathered to remember and celebrate the freeing – known as the exodus - of the Israelites from slavery under the Egyptians by crossing the Red Sea. When Jesus was twelve years old, his parents took him with them to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. After the celebrations had ended, Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, without his parents' knowledge or permission, to speak to the teachers in the Temple.

How was it that the son of a carpenter, who did not go to school, was able to sit “among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions”? What is more impressive is that all who were there who heard him speak were “amazed at his understanding and his answers” (Lk 2: 46-47 RSV CE).

Eventually, when Our Lady and Saint Joseph find Jesus, Jesus said to them, “How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” This is the answer that Jesus gave to His Mother when, after three days' search she had the joy of finding Him in the Temple.

This is the first time we hear Jesus speak in the Bible. In these words Jesus sums up His whole person, His whole life and His whole mission. St. Luke goes on to tell us that Mary “did not understand the word that He spoke.” But even if Mary did not understand fully the meaning of these words, she did not doubt that Jesus was the Son of God. Mary has complete faith and trust in God.

“Mary kept these words of Jesus carefully in her heart”, waiting until the full light of understanding would be granted her.

See: 5 - The Finding In The Temple | EWTN

Prayer Intention for today

We pray for peace in Ukraine, where people are suffering greatly. We pray that people may soon return to their homes and lives. We also pray for those many other places in the world where peace is so much needed; the Middle East, in Nigeria, Ethiopia, in Yemen, in Pakistan, in North Korea, and in Afghanistan. Amen.