

## A Journey towards Spiritual Stewardship, Learning to Pray...

pull out and save for for Life!

### The Hail Mary, the “Angelical Salutation”, “Ave Maria”

Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Christmas was assigned the date of December 25. And so it was that with a calendar and some simple math, March 25 became the feast that celebrates Jesus’ conception. It is on that day that we celebrate that moment when God sent “His only begotten son” to become man. The event marks one of the major tenets of our Catholic faith. We bow with respect as we say these words from the Nicene Creed during Mass:

*For us men and for our salvation  
He came down from heaven:  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
He was born of the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.*

Christ “the Word made flesh” becomes the son of a humble and devout woman of Israel, who thus becomes the mother of God. Therefore, we celebrate the feast of the Annunciation, and honor Mary who obediently and faithfully took on her part in God’s plan for the salvation of mankind. She must have trusted her God without question to take on such a task.

Jesus repeatedly says that he “came into the world” to undergo his passion, death and resurrection to ensure our freedom from the enslavement of the sin of Adam. He “came into the world” through this incarnation. Mary thus became the new Eve, and the mother of a new people, who are reborn through her very selflessness.

The beautiful words used by the Angel Gabriel to salute Mary from the first chapter of Luke’s gospel have become a part of the best known and best loved prayer to Our Lady:

**Hail Mary, full of grace.  
The Lord is with thee.**

LK 1:28

Elizabeth, Mary’s cousin, at a very old age, is also with child as the Angel Gabriel had announced to Mary. Mary visits her cousin and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, greets Mary with these divinely inspired words:

**Blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.**

Lk 1:42

Finally, this petition was added by the Church herself. It implies that we should piously and humbly ask for Mary’s intercession, that she may reconcile us sinners with God and obtain for us the blessings we need both in this present life and for the life which has no end.

**Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**



Let us pray that through the maternal love of Our Lady we will know the loving presence of her Son. And that through prayer and the gospel we may discern what God is calling us to do just as he called this faithful woman so many years ago...

## The Angelus

The Angelus is traditionally recited morning (6:00 a.m.), noon and evening (6:00 p.m.) throughout the year except during the Easter Season, when the Regina Coeli is recited instead.

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

*Hail Mary, etc.*

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.

*Hail Mary, etc.*

V. And the Word was made Flesh.

R. And dwelt among us.

*Hail Mary, etc.*

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.



*Annunciation Fra Angelico - fresco from San Marco, Florence (detail)*  
"Hail Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with thee".  
"Behold the handmaid of the Lord: Be it done unto me according to Thy word".

## The Magnificat

My soul magnifies the Lord,  
And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.  
For He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden,  
For behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.  
For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.  
And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with His arm:  
He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.  
He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree.  
He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He has sent empty away.  
He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy;  
As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to His posterity forever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

The Magnificat [*Latin: magnifies*], also called the Cantic of Mary, is recorded in the Gospel of Luke (1:46-55). It is the Virgin Mary's joyous prayer in response to the Angel Gabriel's annunciation to her that she will become the mother of the Son of God.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes the Magnificat as "the song both of the Mother of God and of the Church" [CCC 2619], and explains this prayer's significance:

In the faith of His humble handmaid, the Gift of God found the acceptance He had awaited from the beginning of time. She whom the Almighty made "full of grace" responds by offering her whole being: "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to Thy word". "Fiat": this is Christian prayer: to be wholly Gods' because He is wholly ours. [CCC 2617]