

Trinity News

Advent IV The Anunciation: Words from Heaven Touching Earth

The announcement to Mary of Nazareth that she would bear a child like no other may not have come in a blinding flash but in a series of prompts from the Holy Spirit. The conversation between Mary and the awesome Angel of the Lord surely “troubled” Mary much more than the brief indication in Luke’s rendition suggests. We cannot get behind such summary statements of complex and startling matters. But we can search for the meaning behind it all. Mary’s culture ensured that she would have been separated from suitors until the one chosen by the family appeared. She would have been expected to be a virgin in her culture at the time of her marriage. Why then is there so much fuss about her being a virgin in this matter? Joseph may not have been a virgin, especially if the legend is true that James the Lord’s brother was the son of Joseph from a previous marriage. There is a connection here between biblical prophecy and the vision that the first Christians had of Jesus and his mother.

Jesus was seen by the first Christians as a focus of God’s plan for the salvation of humanity, so the purity of Mary’s life and intention soon came under the spotlight. There may have been some talk in the village of Nazareth, but Mary is shielded from such questions in the biblical text. The intention of Luke and Matthew is quite clear in presenting Jesus’ conception as supernatural and his mother as a pure woman according to Jewish law. Setting it aside as unverifiable and untrue does not help our search for what really happened.

“We may not know, we cannot tell”, but we still stretch our minds to grasp the reality behind the words. I accept Jesus supernatural conception as the key to understanding the significance of his birth at Bethlehem. It is also connected to his role in the whole counsel of God during his historical life. When he prays to God it is not so much that he is praying **to** God, but **within** God. We strive to get there in prayer. He seems to be already there as he prays.

The announcement to Mary about the coming of Jesus also brings about his conception. When she says, “Let it be done to me according to your word”, she gives her assent to the call of God that has come to her. The summary statements conceal momentous happenings in the plan of salvation. And so it began to unfold in bringing the will and the purpose of God into sight for all to see. What was hidden became known and the mystery exploded into the light of life. After the announcement comes the events. Let us hasten to Bethlehem!

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 147; Galatians 3:23-25;4:4-7; John 1:1-18

CHRISTMAS SERVICES SCHEDULE:

December 24, Christmas Eve.

Family Service w/ Holy Communion & Christmas Pageant, 4:00p.m.

Midnight Service, 10:30p.m. Special reception follows after the service.

December 25, Christmas Day. Holy Eucharist, 10:00a.m.

January 1, New Year. Holy Eucharist, 10:00a.m.
