
“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

3. Between Heaven and earth

What a grace to see our self so sheltered in the example of Our Lady. If it is the attentive reading and meditation of the Word of God, or if it is the personal prayerful contact with our Lady or the friendly communication with the angels – it all leads us to recognize our littleness and to grow in the confidence in God Who leads and does all. Especially, when her silence and humility, her trust and surrender in loving obedience becomes ours then we have nothing to fear, what ever God may want from us.

Let us daily unite ourselves with her and make this event of the annunciation present at Mass: Before Mass being astonished anew in silence about our calling. After the Liturgy of the Word let us ask: Lord, how shall I do it? And clinging to His answer: “Stay with Me and allow Me to do it!”, we proceed to Consecration and Communion with Mary’s “Fiat!”. Let us repeat this frequently throughout the day: “I am Your servant, be it done to me as You wish!” (cf. *Directory*, # 86: “The Eucharist and Mary”).

4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood

Let’s renew our consecration to Our heavenly Mother and then follow her example: “As we contemplate in the Mother of God a life totally shaped by the word, we realize that we too are called to enter into the mystery of faith, whereby Christ comes to dwell in our lives” (Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, 2010, # 28). “Let us be silent in order to hear the Lord’s word and to meditate upon it, so that by the working of the Holy Spirit it may remain in our hearts and speak to us all the days of our lives” (Ibid., # 124). “Every Christian believer, Saint Ambrose reminds us, in some way interiorly conceives and gives birth to the word of God: even though there is only one Mother of Christ in the flesh, in the faith Christ is the progeny of us all. Thus, what took place for Mary can daily take place in each of us, in the hearing of the word and in the celebration of the sacraments” (Ibid., # 28).

Fr. Titus Kieninger

ORC

Mark your calendar for the retreat in Holly, MI: November 9th to 13th, 2015.

Are you aware of this document??

Congregation for Divine Worship, *Homiletic Directory*, 2015 (with the elaborated Appendix about “The homily and the Catechism of the Catholic Church”).

ASSOCIATION OF PRIESTS

IN THE WORK OF THE HOLY ANGELS®

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CHRIST’S PRIESTS UNITED WITH THE HOLY ANGELS IN THE CHURCH

“Could you not watch one hour with Me?”



Association of Priests In Opus Angelorum®

“The angel Gabriel was sent to a virgin, to Mary” (Lk 1:26) XXI, June 2015

Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

St. Luke lets us participate in this most important dialogue between “Heaven and Earth”, between St. Gabriel and the Blessed Virgin, in which the destiny of the world was changed. He recounts the Annunciation in Nazareth (Lk 1:26-38). We are very familiar with it through the *Angelus* and the meditation of the joyful mysteries of the Rosary in which we “look to Mary in order to be a humble, obedient and chaste minister and to bear witness to charity” (*Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, 2nd, substantially enriched ed., 2013, # 84).

Here it is the place to recall (and reflect more) about the idea of Fulton Sheen: “Every priest has the Mary-question put to Him: ‘Will you give God a human nature?’” (*Those Mysterious Priests*, New York, 1974, ch. 7, p. 83). Jesus wants to live and speak and bless and act and pray and still suffer through our human nature. Our heavenly Mother’s “Fiat” echoed in our “Adsum” at ordination after years of formation in the seminary, a walk together of mother and son (cf. CIC 246 § 3). Let’s first look, from the priestly point of view, at Our Lady as receiver and then at St. Gabriel as giver.

1. Called like Our Lady

The initiative was taken by God who sent St. Gabriel “to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin ... Mary”. It is important to observe this. Countless prayers over the centuries had been sent to heaven for the coming of the Messiah. It is in God’s hand when and where His plan would be fulfilled.

So it was also with us: The many prayers of many people anticipated our vocation. And then still, priests are called and chosen freely by God, called to be co-workers of God – like the angel, the priest’s “fellow servant” (Ap 22:9) and considered even associate of of Our Lady, “the handmaid of the Lord” (Lk 1:38)!

Three times the angel spoke; three times we ponder Our Lady’s reaction. First he just referred to her dignity; second he transmitted to her God’s plan regarding her mission, and third, the angel explained to her *how* God would realize it.

a) First, the words of St. Gabriel: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with You!” shocked her; she was “greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind“ - that is, silently - “what sort of greeting this might be”.

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It might have been a word of God too which struck us and convinced us of His call. But still every day the Word of God addresses us in the readings of the Liturgy, and if we listen to them with Marian’s humble and pure heart we too may well be shocked, for the Word of God is alive, is always direct and personal, and calls us to some things beyond our merits and means! Through it we find the truth about ourselves and our mission: We are drawn out from the world of sin; then we are “chosen from among” the faithful, called into familiarity with God – like the “full of grace” – “to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Heb 5:1), and – like her – to mediate God to man, now sacramentally. Like Our Lady we may not say anything, but are taken aback by the call of the Lord; we silently admire the grace God offers a priest, and accept it, trembling, in holy fear before God.

b) The angel proceeded and exposed God’s plan to Our Lady: “You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High.” Our Lady might have been even more astonished at this message. But, pure as she is, that is self-less, she listened attentively, then asked what she should do: “How shall this be, since I have no husband?”

It is not difficult to see our incapacity to accomplish what God expects of us priests: How are we to forgive sins? How can we transubstantiate bread and wine? How can we guide a soul toward eternity? Recall the first time you entered the Confessional – is it any different today? Do we not need to tell God, like our heavenly mother, again and again: Lord, how shall it be done?

c) And once more, the angel told her how God will do it, and how he did similar things elsewhere before like with her kinswoman Elizabeth, “for with God nothing will be impossible.” Our Lady raised no argument to oppose this. So she surrendered to God’s omnipotent will and answered obediently: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” With her “Yes!” God could realize His plan and redeem all mankind.

When we, like Our Lady, listen to the angel and look up to God, then we can hear God speaking through the angel (cf. Ex 3:2,4) like this: “You don’t have to do it; I will do all. I just need you to allow Me to do it through you daily, as you did already at ordination. With an indelible mark I signed you then and for ever as Mine, and I will be yours for ever, faithfully. You just stay with Me, entirely through your chastity and purity of heart, by walking in my presence and speaking constantly with Me through the *Liturgy of the Hours*. If you keep your promises to Me, then I will keep My hand on you and ‘the Holy Spirit will always be upon you, and the power of the Most High [My Father] will overshadow you’; and My Mother will care for you as she cared for Me. ” – If we submit entirely to God’s call and follow Peter’s counsel: “Cast all your anxieties on him, for he cares about you” (1 Pet 5:7), then we can rest at Jesus’ side and trust, come what may, even if we were called – like Our Lady – to His Cross.

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2. Sent like St. Gabriel

St. Gabriel shows us rather the second part of our identity, our priestly mission, being sent, like an angel, in the name of God to men.

a) First, we see him with great respect, as St. Thomas beautifully shows in his short sermon on the Hail Mary. St. Thomas understands St. Gabriel’s approach – “he came to her and said, ‘Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!’” – thus confessing of Mary’s superiority over the angels with regard to dignity, closeness to God and to grace.

As priests we are aware, more than other people, that we are God’s work and therefore just unworthy servants. Hence, our dignity will not lead us to proud behavior, but it urges us to become humble servant of all, to “become all things to all men” (1 Cor 9:22). Dziwisz remarked that “for John Paul, to meet another person is to encounter God” (J. Evert, *Saint John Paul the Great. His Five Loves*, 2014, p. XIV). And of Bl. Mother Teresa is said: She listened to everyone as if just this person would exist. What a beautiful image of God and Jesus we present to men when we approach each one as Our Lord Himself with humility and respect.

b) Second, we see St. Gabriel ready to present God’s plan to Our Lady. His humble approach found her heart open and she was ready to receive God’s Will. St. Gabriel showed respect before man, but in all and first was faithful toward God.

When we priests are close to God, having come to know Him through prayer, then it is easy to present HIS petitions and Will to the people. We know, *not we* request this or that cross from them, *but God*. We see and hear the answer Our Lady gave in the place of all mankind: “How can I do this?” We can trust: The priest’s humility and angelic care open hearts for the message and gifts, and people sense our willingness to help them in all we can.

c) The third word of St. Gabriel encourages us herein. St. Gabriel did not change anything in the humanly impossible plan of God. He helped Mary see the possibility to do it. And again, he pointed not to human capacities like saying, “You will do fine! You know more than you think! ...”. He directed her attention to God’s omnipotence! “Apart from me you can do nothing” (Jo 15:5), but “with God nothing will be impossible” (Lk 1:37).

Again, when we are close to God, we are not afraid to present the full truth, even if it be difficult, because we know, God Himself with His grace will stand by to help and does not ask anything from anyone which would go beyond his capacity. Therefore, St. Gabriel received the consent of Our Lady and could return to God with his mission – successfully – fulfilled. Even so will we receive, at least from people of good will, their obedience and collaboration with God’s grace.