



REFLECTIONS

December 13, 2020

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Luke 1:26-27

The Opera—Immaculate Conception

Like many other days, Mary might have begun her day with a walk to draw water from the well nearby. Her mind, though, wasn't on her daily chores. She had a wedding to plan and a lifetime with Joseph to ponder. Least on her mind was an approaching stranger—least that is until Gabriel said, "*Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.*" (Luke 1:28)

Noting her surprise, the angel continued, "*Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.*" (Luke 1:30-32)

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her. (Luke 1:34-38)

Mary guarded her secret as best she could, but she must have told her parents; and of course, Joseph. *Because Joseph her [betrothed] was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.*

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her (Matt 1:19-21, 24-25a)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world... And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was expecting a child. (Luke 2:1, 3-6)

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