

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Bless you! 2 Samuel 7:1-5,8-12,14,16
The appointed time. Romans 16:25-27
A life-changing announcement. Luke 1:26-38

Next week: Holy Family.

Sirach 3:2-6,12-14;
Colossians 3:12-21;
Matthew 2:13-15,19-23

In a nutshell

Some kinds of news have the power to change the course of our lives, sometimes even changing the course of history. According to Scripture, the Annunciation was a life-changing announcement. Today's Gospel highlights the call of God's radical daughter, Mary, to be the mother of Jesus.



Newsflash

I can remember a number of occasions in my life when I was the bearer of life-changing good news: announcing our engagement to friends, breaking the news that our first baby was on her way, phoning my parents when she was born, telling the kids that Gran had come through her operation...

Such moments can be joyous, anxious. Always they demand a response from within. How much more must Mary have felt that mixture of emotions. (Julia)

Our God of Surprises

The story of the angel Gabriel's announcement impresses upon me how God can unexpectedly break into our lives, capsizing our flimsy plans. You never know what's around the corner! Sometimes God will speak to me through a book, a picture, an unexpected visitor, a news item. God's most surprising gift to me has been the gift of Paul. In January I met him for the first time. Six months later we were engaged to be married. (Donna)

Where there's a lull there's a lesson

There are times in my faith journey when nothing much appears to be happening. God seems to have gone quiet. I can get agitated about this and wonder where all the action is. I've learnt that such periods are often a time of preparation. I am being taught patience. My heart is being healed, my ears opened, my prayer life strengthened, relationships deepened. When the time for action comes, I find myself newly shaped and better equipped because of the period of quiet.

It strikes me that for the 13 or 14 years prior to that startling announcement, Mary was probably living an apparently uneventful life: a simple Jewish girl, involved in ordinary day-to-day activities. And yet the Spirit was transforming her, preparing her for that extraordinary announcement. (Pat)

'I do...'

As a priest I have celebrated many weddings over the years. That moment where the couple exchange wedding vows—that commitment to be 'one' for the rest of their lives—never fails to fill me awe. What they are saying 'yes' to is just so extraordinary, so profound...and there I am standing before them as a witness. What a privilege. It always blows me away! (John)

Luke 1:38 Let's go!

When I hear Mary's words, *'I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me'*, I don't hear a meek, passive lady protectively wrapped in cotton wool. I hear a

passionate young woman, full of zest for life, crying out, 'Yes! Let's go! Let's get this show on the road... whatever the cost. If you're willing, so am I.' (Tony)

Mary makes a difference

'I can't imagine my life, my faith, without Mary. I can't believe once I didn't know about her... It's all so different now.' (Anna)



Think...Talk...Pray

Think back over your own life:

- Who has been God's messenger to you?
- How have you said 'yes' to God's call?
- Listen to Christ-centred Christmas carols, praying the words in your heart.
- Pray with Mary for world peace.

Ready for Christmas?

- Let go of a long-standing grudge.
- Forgive from the heart.
- Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

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RealPeople offers faith reflections from the saints and prophets of everyday life.