

## St. Louis Catholic Church

Friday--Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord

I want to make an announcement to each and every member of St. Louis Church. 275 days to go. 9 months until Christmas Day. Please don't say this year that it crept up on you or that you are not ready. I'm announcing it to you in plenty of time. Announcements are proclaimed to us in the newspapers, on the television, in marketing. We are often told, paged, emailed, faxed or in other ways about something of vital importance in our life. We often don't totally listen, we procrastinate, we dismiss and we forget. Today's Feast is an important announcement to a virgin named Mary.

Isaiah had promised Ahaz, the King of Judah in the southern kingdom, that threats against him would be avoided. A sign would be a son born of David's house. The son born from a virgin, would be called Emmanuel, which means "God is with us".

Gabriel came to that virgin in Nazareth and announced that she had found favor with God. "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you". Like the message to Joseph that we heard on March 19, the angel says, "Do not be afraid". He tells and announces to her that God is at work in her and it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. She obviously had wondered what this could mean and how could it be possible.

The angel announces to her that God can do all things even making possible the conception of Elizabeth in her old age. Mary, indeed, after clarification, heard the announcement and she consented to God's way. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word".

Mary is the new Eve. Visited by an angel, she is told that she is full of grace and she consents to God's will and restores a fallen human race to grace in the person of her son Jesus. He becomes a sacrifice acceptable to God for redemption of fallen nature. The first Eve had been approached by a fallen angel (serpent), told what she didn't have and she did what she wanted rather than what God wanted. She gave us a fallen nature.

From the beginning of time God had prepared Mary to be the vessel, the temple or the tabernacle where He would come and reside and through whom He would become man. In Mary at the Annunciation and through Bethlehem, Nazareth, Galilee, Jerusalem down to Memphis, Tennessee we can proclaim and announce Emmanuel--God is with us.

I believe that in prayer, discernment, listening to God and in our experiences God comes to us and says you too have found favor. We too can make Emmanuel a reality. Christ is born today when members of His Body, the Church, love, sacrifice, serve, help, forgive, share, care, pray and obey. The Church is Christ among us. We make that person visible and alive, like Mary did, when we cooperate with God's plan for us. Sometimes that seems impossible to do but today we are reminded that with God all things are possible.

Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women and  
Blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners  
Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

God Bless,  
Msgr. John McArthur

Remember Stations of the Cross Friday 5:30 p.m.  
Fish Fry 5:00-8:00 p.m. Friday  
Prayer at Planned Parenthood Saturday 11:00 a.m.