

Homily – Austin

March 25, 2019

Nothing is impossible with God! That is why we Christians remain people of hope in a world full of despair – a society torn apart by chaos, partisan polarization, and the forces of evil. We need to look at the people and events of our time as God sees them – with the eyes of faith! The kingdom of God is a place of justice and peace, harmony and unity, mercy and compassion, and enduring love. Many people are working with us to build up the kingdom of God. God bless them! With God, nothing will be impossible!

The story of the Annunciation underscores this truth. The Angel Gabriel is not sent to a king's palace or the capitol but to an obscure town in Galilee, a province scorned as a "heathen" place. Its people were poor. The angel was sent by God to Mary – among the most powerless in her society. She was young in a world that valued age – female in a world ruled by men – poor in a stratified economy. She had no husband to protect her and no child to validate her existence. But God chose her to be the mother of the Savior. She is told that she will become pregnant by the Holy Spirit! After an initial question, she responds: "I am the handmaid of the

Lord.” Thus, Mary is also the first disciple of Jesus, the one who teaches us to say Yes to God as her Son did -- even at the price of shedding his precious blood.

As we listen to Mary’s story, it becomes our story. Listen carefully, my dear sisters and brothers! God is greeting us today through the angel Gabriel. God’s presence abides among and within us. We are created in the image and likeness of God with innate dignity. Whether we are married or celibate or physically virginal, we are called to bring forth the Son of God and proclaim his gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are challenged to be faithful servants of the Lord in all that we say and do. We learn this at the feet of Mary as Jesus did!

Pope Francis has said that “Mary was able to turn a stable into a home for Jesus, with poor swaddling clothes and an abundance of love. She is the handmaid of the Father who sings his praises. She is the friend who is ever concerned that wine not be lacking in our lives. She is the woman whose heart was pierced by a sword and who understand our pain. . . As a true mother, she walks at our side, she shares our struggles, and she constantly surrounds us with God’s love.” With God, nothing is impossible!