

Homily – Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord Pastoral Ministry Center – March 25, 2022

In recent weeks, NASA has delivered two of its most significant innovations in decades, representing the frontiers of human knowledge and exploration. One is the James Webb Telescope, which will allow the most distant observations in time and space ever made. The other one is the SLS rocket, which is set to bring people back to the Moon and beyond. However, between what we will be able to know, and what we will be able to explore, the difference is so immense that our intellect is barely enough to have a glimpse of it. It seems like God gave us just enough intelligence to realize how insignificant we are in comparison with the physical universe he created. He could have created a trillion universes like ours without costing him any effort. Maybe He created all that just to make a point: **He is God, we are not.** And He is the One we have offended with our sins.

The Word of God – God himself – through whom all things came to be, became man and made his dwelling among us through the “handmaid of the Lord”. We know where, when and how this happened: in Nazareth, twenty centuries ago. And the whole Christ – who is the only mediator between God and the human race – truly, really, and substantially continues to make himself present for us through the Church. That is precisely what happens through synodality. We are barely able to understand how we cannot understand. How **immensely unfathomable** is this Mystery! Such is the measure of the good news of God’s love for us! “Hail, full of grace!” **Rejoice!** Y el Verbo se hizo carne.

Sometimes we are tempted to impose external acts of penance on ourselves as payment to God in exchange for certain favors or – at best – for favors received. But our relationship with God is not based on trade. Purely external acts are not truly relational. They are acts of our will that spring from the illusion that we are capable of reaching God. External sacrifices and burnt offerings do not erase sins. We have been consecrated to the Father “through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Heb). We have come back to life because He came to meet our death. It is through our disposition to do the will of the Father how we are **sanctified**. And those

He sanctifies become mediators for the sanctification of others. Y el Verbo se hizo carne por amor.

Mary was never tainted by sin and therefore needed no conversion of heart. However, by the work of the Holy Spirit she became the Mother of God. She offered her life as a blank page to the Lord at the moment of the Annunciation and every day. God himself would be the author of her whole life. By her example, the Lord invites us to surrender our will to God's, offering him in sacrifice everything which makes us feel safe in this life. We imagine many things in the script of our future. We can try to force the plot or we can **let the Holy Spirit guide the pen**. Let God's plan truly be our plan. Y el Verbo se hizo carne por amor.

Our faith should be the source of our security, leading us to ask God: "How can this be, if I" cannot make it happen? Let God undo our projects for us to carry out his work in us and through us. God asks us for a true sacrifice, that we abandon of our whole being – including our understanding and our will – into his Mystery and his will: "Here I am, Lord; I come to do your will." That is what Mary did: "**May it be done to me according to your word.**" Y el Verbo se hizo carne.

St. John says that "What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (1:4-5). Through the tender encounter between God and Mary – mediated by the angel – **God communicated his own life** to her and to the world. To use the beautiful language of Pope Francis, by starting the revolution of tenderness, God founded the culture of encounter, which conceives the culture of life.

It is in this spirit – **trusting in the Holy Spirit** to whom we have consecrated ourselves – that today, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, we carry out **three significant acts**. **1.** We celebrate human life in the womb from conception – which is the image of Christ in Mary's womb – throughout its course until natural death. **2.** We join Pope Francis in consecrating Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, trusting

that God will grant us peace – which fosters life – as we do not know how this can be. And 3. I proclaim the renewal of our Pastoral Vision, as we await the fruits of the synodal process.

Blessed Mother Mary, in your hands we place our full disposition to do the will of God. Teach us to be open to the Mystery of God, who wants to enter our history and transform it for the sake of the World.