

## Mary, the Mother of Jesus

### Introduction:



Among the Hebrew people there was a strong sense of national identity and the main reason for this could be found in their religion. At the heart of the Hebrew religion was the unshakeable conviction that Yahweh, their God had rescued them from slavery in Egypt, twelve hundred years before the birth of Jesus and He had made a special covenant with them. All their worship centred on the Exodus and the Covenant. Their three great festivals celebrated their joy and gratitude to

Yahweh who had brought them out of Egypt and settled them in Palestine. They looked forward to a time when they would be politically free and supreme amongst the nations of the world. The Messiah would be the architect, who would make this dream come through. Mary was raised with this dream and she too waited in joyful hope for the coming of the Messiah.

### Reading: Lk. 1: 38

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. Upon arriving, the angel said to her: 'Rejoice, O highly favoured daughter! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.' She was deeply troubled by his words, and wondered what his greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her: 'Do not fear, Mary. You have found favour with God. You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus. Great will be his dignity and he will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over the house of Jacob forever and his reign will be without end.'

Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be since I do not know man?' The angel answered her: 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; hence, the holy offspring to be born will be called the Son of God. Know that Elizabeth your kinswoman has conceived a son in her old age; she who was thought to be sterile is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible with God.'

Mary said: 'I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say.' With that the angel left her.

### Reflection:

Mary how happy you must have felt...Betrothed to Joseph the carpenter...Well known and loved in Nazareth...How suddenly your secure world was turned upside down...

This angel Gabriel...Who was he?...What did he want?...What did he mean....Rejoice....O, highly favoured daughter!...The Lord is with you...

Blessed are you among women...No wonder you were deeply troubled...

This was enough to frighten you to death...You pondered what this greeting meant... And you were no wiser...His next words deepened your unease...You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus...What would Joseph have to say about this...Would he believe that she had seen an angel who told her she was pregnant...Would he put her away quietly?...Would he disgrace her?

In her innocence she blurted out to the angel....How can this be since I am a virgin...I have had no intimate relationship with Joseph...The angel must surely have been in awe at her beautiful simplicity and truthfulness...He answered by telling her that she would be impregnated by the Holy Spirit and she would give birth to the Son of God...What an incredible revelation...Why her....Seeing her deepening puzzlement the angel gave her proof that God can work the impossible by telling her that Elizabeth her kinswoman had conceived in her old age... Then Mary you gave your response to this strange proposal....'**I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say.**' ...How relieved Gabriel must have been....How astonished at this holy woman's assent....How mesmerised at God's plan as he returned to his home with God.

Mary, how many holy men and women have followed in your footsteps and placed blind trust in God...God who always loves us and helps us to find a way...Did you know then that at last the Messiah had come?...or did it gradually dawn on you?...How much we owe you!

**Prayer:**

My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked upon his servant in her lowliness  
all ages to come shall call me blessed.  
God who is mighty has done great things for me,  
Holy is His name;  
His mercy is from age to age  
on those who fear Him.  
He has shown might with his arm;  
He has confused the proud in their inmost thoughts.  
He has deposed the mighty from the thrones  
and raised the lowly to high places.  
The hungry he has given every good thing,  
While the rich he has sent empty away.  
He has upheld Israel his servant,  
ever mindful of his mercy;  
even as he promised our fathers,  
promised Abraham and his descendents forever.