

The Annunciation – First Joyful Mystery Luke 1:26-38

Compare the Style of Mark and Luke by the introductory lines of their respective gospels

Mark 1:1-5 “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. As it is written in

Isaiah the prophet: “Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.’” John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism....”

Luke 1:1-5 “Since many have undertaken to *compile a narrative* of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and ministers of the word have handed them down to us, I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an *orderly sequence* for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize *the certainty of the teachings* you have received. In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.....”

Luke is more methodical and precise about historical setting: person, place and time.

Yet, the details also speak to us of how providential God is about working His will, setting all the pieces in place, and guiding all the persons open to His working.

Yet, each person must align his/her own life mutually with others under the direction of God.

Luke 1:38 “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

Luke 1:45 Elizabeth said to Mary, “Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

So, Mary can tell others, “Do whatever He tells you” (John 2:25). Her own example is testimony.

Yet, Mary does ponder and honestly seek God’s Will. She is absolutely trusting of God in her ‘willingness’, yet she intelligently senses the unlikeliness of such events, the risks of assenting and the necessity of ‘grace’ for the completion of God’s will.

Mary is honest and searching about God’s plan/intention as she indicates by asking Gabriel in

Luke 1:34 “Mary said to the angel, “How can this be,.....?”

Mary likewise seeks her son Jesus’ plan/intention in their lost & found episode in the Temple –

Luke 2:48 “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” Mary is honestly making known her heart’s concern & questions.

These early times of trusting, yet still pondering, are preparations for harder ones to come.

Keep in mind that Mary has the best teacher of this ‘docility’ Luke 2:51 “Jesus went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them...” (After the Temple Finding)

Mark 3:31-35 “His mother and his brothers arrived. Standing outside they sent word to him and called him. A crowd seated around him told him, “Your mother and your brothers and your sisters are outside asking for you.” But he said to them in reply, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” (Parallel in Matt 12:46–50 & Luke 8:19–21) *Mary is teaching those around her (own kinsmen, too) docility and surrender to God in Jesus.*

John 2:3-4 “the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And, Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.”

John 19:25-27 "**Standing by** the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Son behold your mother.' From that hour the disciple took her into his home."

Fears can be fed when uncertainty or unlikeliness abounds!

Luke 1:13 "But the angel said to him, "**Do not be afraid**, Zechariah,"

Luke 1:30 "Then the angel said to her, "**Do not be afraid**, Mary,"

Luke 2: 10 "The angel said to the shepherds, "**Do not be afraid**; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy..."

Matthew 1:20 "the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, **do not be afraid** to take Mary your wife into your home....."

Yet, again, Mary sets an example of prayerful meditation and contemplative reflection

As in Luke 1:34 "How can this be....?", Mary is meditative, deliberative, contemplative

Luke 1:29 "Mary pondered what sort of greeting this might be....."

Luke 2:19 "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." (Christmas Eve)

Luke 2:33 "The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him" (Simeon)

Luke 2:51 "and his mother kept all these things in her heart." (Finding in Temple Episode)

Mary as humble maiden, and well-grounded young woman familiar with domestic work duties
Interesting Note about Mary's Question in Luke 1:34 "But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" (Practical and Earthy)

Very down to earth, seemingly not yet concerned about the theologically loaded claims or speculative messianic implications in v. 32 'Son of Most High' & 'David's Throne' or v. 33 'rule over house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end'. **Major Issues**

Yet, by the time Mary visits Elizabeth she can assert some of her theological/prayerful reflection:

Luke 1:46 "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord"

Luke 1: 54-55 "He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy, according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." (Covenantal History)

But, Mary's Humility recognized by God is what mostly shines through her 'Magnificat'

Luke 1:48 "For he has looked upon his handmaid's **lowliness**;"

49 The *Mighty One* has done *great* things for me,

50 "His mercy is from age to age to **those who fear him**

52 "but lifted up the **lowly**"

53 "The **hungry he has filled** with good things;"

Mary's Abandonment to & Trust in God & her detachment and renunciation of her own will

St Therese 'Little Flower' says "Jesus showed her that the way to holiness lies in the trust and self-abandonment of a child who falls asleep without fear in the arms of his Father: "'Whoever is a little one, let him come to me.' So speaks the Holy Spirit through the mouth of Solomon. This same Spirit of Love also says: 'For to him that is little, mercy will be shown.' The prophet Isaiah reveals in His name that on the last day... 'as a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you; I shall carry you at my breasts, and caress you on my knees'... Jesus does not demand great actions from us but simply surrender and gratitude." (from Story of a Soul IX).