



DARE TO DREAM

Introduction to Lenten Reflections

Week beginning 14th -19th February 2021

'I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me.' Luke 1:38

For our introductory session we focus on Mary and the life-changing decision she was asked to make when the angel came to her with a message from God. Whilst in Scripture it seems that her decision was made instantaneously, the likelihood is that it took her sometime before she could respond. In the end it was possible because Mary lived a life rooted in prayer with a desire to do the will of God. Her eyes were consistently on God and her ears open to hearing what God was calling her to.

Video: The Call to Mission – Discerning the Way Forward

Watch and listen to Fr. Tom Smith

Prayerfully read this passage from the Gospel of Luke 1: 26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

- Take some to ponder on the words you have just read.
- Notice if there is anything, a word or phrase that stands out for you.
- Read the passage again and then reflect upon all or some of these questions: if you are doing this as a family or a group, make sure everyone is given the opportunity to speak.

As an individual

- Who are you in this scene?
- If you are Mary, what is your response to this message from the angel?
- If you are the angel, how do you feel about the message you are bringing?

Now think about your parish

- Who are the messengers in your parish?
- What kind of message do they tend to bring – one of hope, of despair, of anxiety?
- What is the message from God that the angel is bringing to your parish?
- How will you discern the authenticity of God's messenger?
- How will you respond to the opportunities being presented to you?

Finish your reflections with the Diocesan prayer:

God our Father,
open the horizons of our minds and hearts
so that we can see what hope your call holds for us.
Pour out the overflowing gifts of your Spirit so that we, your Church,
may become a people of hope for our world.
We ask you this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

Our Lady, Woman of Hope, pray for us.
St Peter, Rock of Hope, pray for us.
St Paul, Apostle of Hope, pray for us.

Journal

Now, take some time to write any thoughts, feelings or ideas which have come to mind during this time of prayer.

