

PARISHES OF
ST PIUS X, ALDERLEY EDGE, ST BENEDICT'S, HANDFORTH
AND
SACRED HEART & ST TERESA'S WILMSLOW
WEEKLY REFLECTION

Sunday 30th November 2025: First Sunday of Advent
The Expectations of Mary, Daughter of Joachim and Anna (1)

What would Mary have been thinking in those weeks and months after the visit from the Angel Gabriel? She who pondered so much in her heart. Over the next three weeks, through the use of spiritual imagination, I give my personal suggestion of what those thoughts may have been.....

... As soon as I became pregnant I had problems. How do I tell my dad, Joachim, and my mum, Anna? They are a good and holy couple and they have always trusted me, so I will keep quiet for the moment.

How do I tell Joseph? I am engaged to him. He has been married before and is wise to the world. Indeed, his first wife died giving birth to James. I am to be married to him on my 15th birthday, but how will he take this? I know I must be quiet for the moment.

But they will see. He will see! As I go about the village, the villagers will see, questions will arise. Who is the father? Is it Joseph? Surely not anyone else!

Time went by and I grew, and mum noticed quickly the change in me. Then she and my dad asked me to tell them everything. I could see they were thinking the wrong thing by their worried frowns. They trusted me, but when I told them of what the angel said, "Hail full of grace, the Lord is with you," and that he had said, "Mary do not be afraid, you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High", when I told them this they shook their heads and looked down at the ground. They did not scold but neither did they believe me. They were aware that I knew the facts of life; I had slept in a one-roomed house with no privacy since I was a child and, in summertime, families around slept in the courtyard as the houses were like ovens.

To help mum and dad understand, I told them what I had said back to the angel, "How can this come about, since I am a virgin?", and that the angel had replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. And so the child will be Holy and will be called The Son of God."

I could see by mum and dad's demeanour that they were deeply concerned, very worried indeed. So I went on quickly, "Mum", I now spoke to her directly trying to recruit her support, "The angel said more. He said, "Know this too; your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her late years, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God." So, Mum, I replied to the angel, "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me." And then I finished by saying, "and then, Mum, the angel left me."

Mum looked at me with eyes of amazement but said nothing. She caught my dad by the elbow and took him to one side, whispering. I knew what I had said about Elizabeth was a revelation to them, as it had indeed been to me. They came back and I could see they had a plan in their minds as mum said, "we will send you with the next caravan going to Jerusalem. Stay there and then go to Zachariah and Elizabeth. As you say that Elizabeth is also pregnant, you can help her with the birth of her child. In the meantime, stay at home. But as soon as Joseph gets back from the market next week, you must tell him what you have told us."

I knew that my astonishing story about Elizabeth was being used to put me to the test and I also knew that I would dread telling Joseph. It would be even harder than telling mum and dad. Mums know better than anyone! I went to the doorpost of our house and touched the mezuzah nailed there by Joseph. It contained the ten commandments and I like to touch it before praying. I sat down on the stone seat in the shade from the sun and pondered over all these things deep in my heart. I knew always, that by God's grace, I lived a life in union with Him. I was indeed full of God mentally, spiritually and now physically, but my worries still kept coming back. I still had to face Joseph and just what would be his very human and sorrowful reaction? And would he understand?

The days and hours dragged by and then he was home, and he rushed down to see me. As I tried to explain the inexplicable, I saw the tears well up in his eyes. He turned on his heels without saying a word, walked away, his head bowed, his shoulders heaving as he silently cried. Cry..... I did too. Still, I trusted in God and was angry with Him at the same time. God could be lopsided when he wanted to be, I thought.

I did not sleep that night, but through the long hours my prayers mingled with my tears as I repeated over and over again through the hours, "O God, come to my aid."

I knew God would be with me, but for now I felt abandoned. I soon found that I really had no need to question or be worried, for Joseph was at the door at dawn knocking excitedly. If God could work wonders in me, He could work wonders in Joseph, too. He knew God's will. An angel had come to him too, and had said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus."

I was overjoyed and my heart swelled with gratitude to God and I fell on my knees in thanksgiving. Then I said to Joseph, "I must go to Elizabeth at Ein Karim outside

Jerusalem.” Joseph said that he would come with me and that we could get married in the Synagogue in Ein Karim before Elizabeth’s husband, the Priest Zachariah. Joseph knew that as soon as we were married he would be for God alone and that I, too, would be for God alone. Our love for each other mingled and overflowed with our union and immersion in the love of God.

Kevin H.