

than a startling new future is proposed. Mary gives up her own wishes in order to adopt God's desire; she gives up personal control of her life in favour of God's promise; in her response she pledges her body and spirit to the purposes of God.

Mary assists the struggle of God to be one like us. There is something dangerously new about Mary. She is the woman at the centre of the Christian story. It is a woman, not a man, who brings God's real presence into the world. Through her the presence of the *Christos Kyrios* will be known and celebrated.



**PRAYER**

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful; O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

*Fr Denis McBride's book Stations of the Infancy is available from Redemptorist Publications. Visit [www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk) to order. CODE:1861 ISBN: 9780852315590*

**Mass text**

**ENTRANCE ANTIIPHON**

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

FIRST READING 2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16

PSALM Psalm 88

RESPONSE I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

1. I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord; through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth. Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever, that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. R.

2. "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages." R.



@redemptorist

3. He will say to me: "You are my father, my God, the rock who saves me." I will keep my love for him always; for him my covenant shall endure. R.

SECOND READING Romans 16:25-27

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the handmaid of the Lord: let what you have said be done to me. Alleluia!!

GOSPEL Luke 1:26-38

**COMMUNION ANTIIPHON**

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

**Next Sunday's Readings:**

Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3

Hebrews 11:8; 11-12; 17-19

Luke 2:22-40



[www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk) [rp@rpbooks.co.uk](mailto:rp@rpbooks.co.uk)

SUNDAY BULLETIN

THE ANNUNCIATION TO MARY

*VIRGIN ANNUNCIATE,*

ANTONELLO DA MESSINA, 1476

In paintings of the annunciation you usually see the angel Gabriel visiting Mary with God's message. Antonello focuses on Mary alone as she is interrupted during her reading. She is neither crowned nor does she have a halo: she is a young woman of Nazareth. In this painting we, not Gabriel, are the viewers. Each of us is invited to look at Mary, without Gabriel and without the distraction of a background, as she graciously responds to God's word.



Reading: Luke 1:26-38

**REFLECTION**

Mary gives the classic response of the disciple when challenged by the word of God: "Let what you have said be done to me." That is her annunciation, her consent to hand over her body and spirit to God's purpose. The love that offers itself is the love that must wait. That is why there are two annunciations: God's best plans can only happen when there is human cooperation, when God's word and our word come together. When those two annunciations come together, God's word always becomes flesh.

Mary, like all mothers, gives over her body and mind and soul so that new life may be born. She does this so that a life larger than hers may take its own place in the world. All mothers must wait for the gradual process that is happening within them; they must learn to let go of the child within them. They must not only nurture the presence of the child within them; they must nurture the leaving of the child. The act of childbirth is the painful act of letting go, so that the life within can take its own separate place in the world. Mary's vocation is not only to hold Jesus within her but to let him go, let him become the person he must become.

Whatever Mary was planning for her life with Joseph, it did not include becoming pregnant outside that relationship. An unexpected word interrupts the routine of life and proposes a groundbreaking diversion from what is planned; nothing less

Stations  
the Infancy



In this series, on his book *Stations of the Infancy* Fr Denis McBride looks at the beginnings of Jesus story as us to reflect on our prayers

20 DECEMBER 20

4TH SUNDAY OF A

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEE