

Homily – Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord Youth Spectacular – March 25, 2023

“With a friend, we can speak and share our deepest secrets. With Jesus too, we can always have a conversation. Prayer is both a challenge and an adventure. And what an adventure it is! Gradually Jesus makes us appreciate his grandeur and draw nearer to him. Prayer enables us to share with him every aspect of our lives and to rest confidently in his embrace. At the same time, it gives us a share in his own life and love. When we pray, we open everything we do to him, and we give him room so that he can act, enter, and claim victory.”

Those are words of Pope Francis, describing what prayer is. They ultimately describe the mystery we celebrate today because **Mary’s whole life was the most perfect prayer.** Through her, and with her, God wanted to begin his own adventure to become man and his challenge to save us. The moment of the Annunciation marked the beginning of God’s revolution of tenderness, which has flipped the world upside down.

Mary was “greatly troubled.” How could she not be troubled! God himself chose her to be the Mother of his Son, the Mother of God. **She accepts the challenge:** *“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”* For nine months she felt her own son, the son of God, growing in her womb. From the moment she said “yes,” Jesus never left her heart.

At times – when she did not understand Him or when he was in danger – she felt anxious and concerned. She *“kept all these things,*

reflecting on them in her heart.”(Lc 2:51). Even when they sentenced him to death, and almost all his friends abandoned him, she continued by his side. At the foot of the cross, as her immaculate heart was pierced and the Sacred Heart of Jesus was crowned with thorns, they were united. **She took part in God’s challenge and adventure.** She always kept moving forward with Jesus.

At the Resurrection, she was the happiest person ever – literally. And she continues to be. She shares everything with Jesus. Even her Assumption into heaven is a participation in her Son’s destiny, **an anticipation of what awaits us.**

God is love, so love took flesh from Mary. You too are called to incarnate love. **God loves you madly!** Say to the person next to you: **God loves you madly!** ... Louder: **God loves you madly!** Now, let us all cry out: **God loves me madly!** ... Louder: **God loves me madly!**

That’s right! Jesus wants you to take part in his adventure of love! He wishes us to share in Mary’s gift and challenge. He announces to us that he wants Jesus to be born in our hearts. The Most High – the Holy Spirit – wants to overshadow you, inspiring you to love madly. **Do you accept the challenge?** ... I can’t hear you.

Inspired by Our Lady of Guadalupe, **go forward!** Turn the world upside down, fighting injustice and spreading love! Take risks! God loves you! He wishes to expand his love in you and through you! Turn your prayer into life and your life into prayer. **Accept the challenge and begin the adventure** through which Jesus gives you a share in his own life and love.