

## A reflection for Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March - The Annunciation

Luke 1:26-38

For nothing is impossible with God (v.37)

We are exactly nine months away from Christmas 2020 – our next celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. One hopes that in that time the issues around Coronavirus will be brought under control for “nothing is impossible with God,” as Mary was informed.

Last Sunday I had us thinking about Motherhood and here we are going back to Mary’s time of preparation for an unknown future. How would the next 9 months pan out? What would happen in the years that were to follow? Questions that are on our minds; as pregnancy meant nothing would ever be the same again for Mary so our daily lives will always be affected by the time we are living through.

It is so easy to read the story and forget that Mary and Joseph were normal human beings seeking to get on with their daily living when the rug was pulled out from under their feet in a startling way.

How we look at the story may make us reflect upon it differently but let us take it as written. How would Mary and Joseph tell their families? How would they tell their neighbours and friends?

Today the Church remembers the story of how Mary came to be the mother of Jesus and to play a pivotal role in the history of salvation.

In the art world there are many images of this incident and one I reflect on regularly is somewhat different from most. It is by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and is his picture of the Annunciation. (It does have a Latin name *Ecce Ancilla Domini*.)

I have included a small image of it at the end of this piece but online it is possible to see it in greater detail. The colours of red and blue – seen in many Madonna and Child images are there; the colours of Virginité and Motherhood, in that order display a bold statement in colour choice.

This was the last religious painting Rossetti painted as he was slated for his portrayal of Mary in a shift gown, amongst other criticism. The model was his sister Christina Rossetti.

The lily that Gabriel holds, which points towards Mary’s womb, has two open flowers and a bud; the stitched picture in the foreground has three open flowers; the image of the completed Trinity. “may your words to me be fulfilled.” Luke 1:38.

Rossetti had painted a picture entitled “The Childhood of Mary” in which Mary is seen stitching the work.

Grace is seen in the action of God; Prevenient Grace is an important theme in our Methodist Tradition; God is at work in us before we are aware of it or respond to it. God’s grace is also cooperative, God inviting us to cooperate with him in his mission of Kingdom Building.

### To Ponder:

- What picture comes to mind when you read the story of the Annunciation?
- How might seeing the person of Mary as being as normal a human being as you are challenge your expectations of how God works?

