

The Feast of the Annunciation



Picture *The Annunciation* Fra Angelico

On the 25th of March we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation. We reflect on Mary's wholehearted response to God's request to become the Mother of Jesus. A 'fiat' that she gave not knowing what it would entail in her life or the life of her child, but surely knowing that from the beginning this was not going to be easy. It was an act of profound faith and trust.

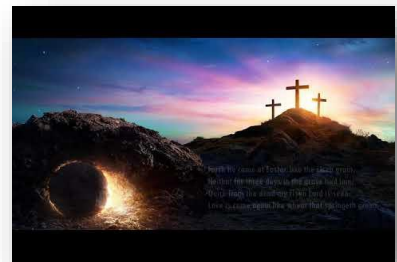
Lent is a season when we take the time to reflect on the passion of Jesus, when we walk with Him through

the last days before Calvary. And when we look forward to celebrating His resurrection and the new life in Him that we share. But again this calls for a deep faith and trust, like Mary, whether it is in the times of suffering that come to all of us in our life, or the suffering of peoples around the world caught up in war, violence or the terrible effects of climate change, or the desecration of the natural world through human greed.

Lent coincides with spring in our part of the world. The amazing symbol of hope that new life comes through death.

Through the darkness of winter the earth has been resting until life stirs again in the newness of spring.

As we contemplate God's gift of new life through the miracle of spring, we can reflect also on how we need to protect and nurture our earth.



Song - *Now The Green Blade Riset*

As Pope Francis has written in his encyclical *Laudato Si* - Para 86

We understand better the importance and meaning of each creature if we contemplate it within the entirety of God's plan. God wills the interdependence of creatures. The sun and the moon, the cedar and the little flower, the eagle and the sparrow: the spectacle of their countless diversities and inequalities tells us that no creature is self-sufficient. Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other and in the service of each other.

Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth. [LS para 92]

God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement. [LS89]

Pause to reflect.

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Is there some small way we can contribute to care for our earth, knowing that all of us, our sisters and brothers across the world, the animals and plants are interconnected and need each other for a healthy and just life?

And so Jesus' resurrection is our promise of newness too, for ourselves, for humanity and for the earth.

Can we open our hearts to discern and receive whatever New gift God is offering us now in our lives?



Music - Laudato Si O Mi Signore

Blown to newness

*The news is that God's wind is blowing
It may be a breeze that cools and comforts.
It may be a gust that summons you to notice.
It may be a storm that blows you where you have
Never been before
Whatever the wind is in your life,
Pay attention to it....
and the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Spirit,
Will abide with you always.
Walter Brueggeman*

