

One

Collaborating with Christ's Mission

When the Angel Gabriel came to Mary, he was inviting her to become the Mother of the Incarnate Son. Mary, by saying, “Yes” to God’s plan, brought God to earth and supplied Him with a human nature and a human genealogy. Mary was, in fact, intimately involved in bringing about the Incarnation. Jesus was fully God and fully man, and Mary supplied the humanity.

But Jesus’ mission wasn’t just to become incarnate. As Fulton Sheen says, Jesus was the only person ever born with the mission to die. He had come to save us, and He would save us on the cross. Mary, in saying yes to the Incarnation, was agreeing to give Christ the materials with which to save the world.

Two

The Weapons of Christ

Christ came to fight for us. He came as a warrior, to overthrow the “Prince of this world,” Satan. Satan was the strong man, who held us in bondage through fear of death (Heb 2), and Christ defeated him, bound him, and took his possessions. But how did Christ defeat Satan? What were his tools? What were his weapons?

Satan’s weapons are cruelty, threats, treachery, terror, betrayal, contempt, and death. And Christ’s weapon, His one weapon, was to submit to all of it. Christ’s weapon was a humanity that could suffer all the malice hell could inflict. That was how he saved us. That was how he defeated Satan: with the weapon of a vulnerable humanity.

And Mary was the one who gave Christ that weapon at the Annunciation.

Three

Supplying the Weapons of Salvation

In her insightful book on Mary, *The Reed of God*, Caryll Houselander has this to say about Mary's decision at the Annunciation to become the Mother of God. She says, "In giving life to Him, she was giving Him death. All other children born must inevitably die; death belongs to fallen nature; the mother's gift to the child is life. But Christ *is* life; death did not belong to Him. In fact, unless Mary would give Him death, He could not die. Unless she would give Him the capacity for suffering, He could not suffer. He could only feel cold and hunger and thirst if she gave Him *her* vulnerability to cold and hunger and thirst. He could not know the indifference of friends or treachery or the bitterness of being betrayed unless she gave Him a human mind and a human heart. That is what it meant to Mary to give human nature to God. He was invulnerable; He asked for a body to be wounded. He was joy itself; He asked her to give Him tears. He was God; He asked her to make Him man. He asked for hands and feet to be nailed. He asked for flesh to be scourged. He asked for blood to be shed. He asked for a heart to be broken."

This is what Mary did at the Annunciation. She said yes to all that.

Four

The Shadow of the Cross

There's a powerful painting of the Annunciation by Giovanni Gaspara. In this painting, Mary is holding her hands up in a gesture of submission

and acceptance. And the light from the angel, when it hits her raised hands, throws a shadow against the back wall. You can see, in the shadow from Mary's posture of obedience, an outline of Christ hanging on the cross. Because Mary wasn't just saying yes to pregnancy. She was saying yes to salvation. She was saying yes to Calvary.



Five

New Eve Supplying the New Adam

Whenever we think about the fall in the Garden, we always think about Adam *and* Eve. Because, after all, Eve was the one to talk to the devil, she was the first one to obey him, and she was the one who supplied Adam with the apple – the material he needed to doom the human race to death.

Well, the Catholic Church is very emphatic in recognizing that in our salvation, there is a new Adam and a new Eve as well. Mary is that new Eve. And on the feast of the Annunciation, we remember that she was the first to talk to the angel. She was the first to obey God's plan through the angel. And she was the one to supply the New Adam, Jesus, with the materials He needed to bring the human race back to life, namely, His humanity.

So let's end this rosary meditating on our debt to Mary, and thanking her for saying, "Yes."