

The Pray More Lent Retreat Study Guide

Mary's Role in Our Redemption

with Scott Powell

Reflective Questions

“Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the scribes and ancients, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles.” –Mark 10:33

1. Even though it is Lent, in this video, Scott encourages us to reflect upon a passage usually contemplated during Christmastide: Mary's fiat (her humility and obedience to God's will) at the Annunciation. At the beginning of the Gospel according to St Luke, Gabriel is sent to two different people in very different social situations: Zachery and Mary. Zachery is an important priest in the holy city of Jerusalem who offers incense to God for the prayers of the whole nation of Israel. In contrast, Mary is a young, poor virgin living in the less-consequential town of Nazareth. If we didn't already know the news Gabriel brought to Mary, we would probably guess that the Lord's message for Zachery was much more important. Have you ever felt that you are unable to do God's will in the situation you are in right now? You might get trapped into thinking things like: once I get that big promotion or get married *then* I'll be able to say yes to what God is asking me to do. On the contrary, God is always calling us (and especially this Lent) to stop waiting for *our idea* of the perfect circumstances and to do His will wherever we are at right now.

2. When St Gabriel the Archangel arrives to Mary, he gives her the title “full of grace.” Scott explains that he doesn't mean ‘Hail, favored one’ or ‘Hail, cool lady,’ but ‘Hail to the person whom God has already worked a profound act in.’ She is full of grace because God willed her to be immaculately conceived. Mary (understandably) expresses some trepidation to this title and to Gabriel's announcement that ‘the Lord is

with her.’ These were words that she (as a devout Jewish girl) knew were spoken to the Old Testament prophets called to do something big. How would you feel if an angel appeared to you and announced God chose you to do something that seems impossible and dangerous? Would you react as Zachery did with suspicion or as Mary did with humble questioning and total servitude to God’s will?

3. Mary’s decision to trust God’s will was seemingly impossible. Since she was only betrothed to Joseph, her family and all around her knew that they had not consummated their marriage. When Mary submitted herself to God’s will that she become pregnant with Jesus, she was not just saying ‘yes’ to pregnancy out of wedlock and possible humiliation. She was trusting that God would protect her from the law of the land which condemns adulterers to death by stoning. She trusted that God’s will is unfathomable and that He had a plan for her. Do you ever feel called by God to a task which you have no clue how to complete? From Mary’s perspective, the only possible end to her pregnancy she could imagine was persecution and death. God called Mary (and calls us) to trust that the path He sets for us will come to the best conclusion—the beatific vision!

4. God is trustworthy. Mary’s faith in God allowed Him to work through her to accomplish the impossible. What is a path in your life which you should give up to God? Think about the places in your life where you can say to God: “be it done to me according to thy word.”—Luke 1:38