

ECHO



24TH MARCH 2022

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF OCCITANIE www.ourchurch.fr

25th March - The Feast Of The Annunciation

A reflection by Norma Murrain

As Christians around the world celebrate the visit of the Angel to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus, conveniently 9 months to the day before Christmas Day, there are 7 lessons to be learned from Mary, based on the story as it is told in the Gospel of St. Luke:

TRUST: Mary trusted God. As a devout Jew, she would have known the Jewish scriptures and prophecies of the coming Messiah, which enabled her to recognise God's will and plan.

WILLINGNESS: She was willing to surrender her life to God's will, she never asked why, she only asked how; the 'how' question itself shows a willingness to obey. "How will this be", Mary said, "since I am a virgin."

OBEDIENCE: She was obedient "I am the Lord's servant" she said.

SURRENDER: Mary surrendered herself to God's will. Surrender goes a step further than obedience when she said, "let it be to me according to your Word." She shows a complete yielding and openness to God.

FAITH: Mary's faith was built on trust; her unwavering belief was evident to her cousin Elizabeth who when she saw Mary exclaimed: "Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished."

ACTION AND TESTIMONY: She turned words into action. It's one thing to say we believe or even to say yes to God but it's a whole different ball game to get up, get ready and go and tell somebody about His love. Mary did just that: "At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth."

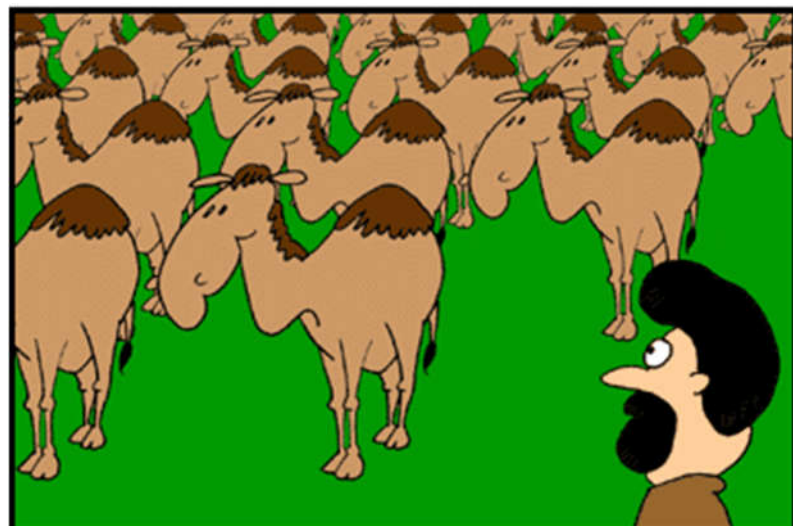
WORSHIP: Finally, Mary worshiped God. Her poetic song of love - The Magnificat - shows her genuine love and reverence for God.



The Annunciation is a fresco painted by Fra Angelico between 1440 and 1445 in the Convent of San Marco in Florence. The fresco is painted on a corridor wall on the 1st floor where the dormitories are located.

Underneath it is inscribed:

"When you come before the image of the Ever-Virgin take care that you do not neglect to say an Ave", reminding the faithful to pray every day



IN A MOMENT OF PANIC, ELIAS REALISED THAT HE HAD FORGOTTEN EXACTLY WHERE HE HAD PARKED HIS CAMEL

COMMUNION SERVICE IN ALET LES BAINS

Thursday 31st March - 15:00
in Les Marguerites Restaurant

Next Thursday, we will be meeting to share Communion at Les Marguerites Restaurant. Our worship will begin at 15:00.

Although Covid restrictions are now being relaxed, you are still asked to bring your own piece of bread and some wine or fruit juice and a plastic goblet to share with other members of your 'bubble'.

After the service you are invited to stay for tea and piece of cake - sadly the cake will not have been baked by Antoinette this time (she is on holiday) but the good news is that there will be no cost if you stay to share tea us.

Because we still have to limit numbers, if you would like to join us, please let us know in advance by e-mailing

contact@ourchurch.fr

You do not need to have a Passe Sanitaire to join us but if, depending on the weather, we worship indoors, we will ask you to wear a face mask.

DON'T FORGET TO PUT YOUR CLOCKS FORWARD ONE HOUR THIS SATURDAY NIGHT !



I REALLY HATE HAVING TO DO THIS TWICE A YEAR

TIE A YELLOW RIBBON - THE REAL STORY

In 1973, the singer Tony Orlando went to Number 1 in both the UK and the USA with the song "Tie A Yellow Ribbon Round The Old Oak Tree".

There are various tales about the origins of the song, in which a young man decides only to return home if his family have tied a yellow ribbon around the oak tree outside their house.

One version was told by the Presbyterian Rev John Wilbur Chapman of Indiana who became a priest in 1893.

One evening Chapman was travelling by train in a rural part of Kansas. The other passenger in the carriage was a young man who kept glancing out the window and then covering his face with his hands. Chapman asked if he could help.

The young man confessed that many years before he had run away from home and 'sown his wild oats.' He had not written to his parents at all, until a few weeks before, telling them that he would be travelling on this train. At a

certain point it passed very close to his home. In the letter he had begged his parents' forgiveness and asked if they wanted him to come home. If so, they were to tie a yellow ribbon on the old apple tree that grew right beside the railway lines.

"Sir," he said to Chapman, "the train will soon pass my home but I'm afraid to look. If there's a yellow ribbon on the tree, I'll get off at the next station and go home. If there's no ribbon, I'll just travel on. But I'm too afraid to look out for the tree." So Chapman offered to look for him.

"You can open your eyes now," he said a few minutes later. The returning prodigal looked at Chapman with tears and quivering lips. 'All is well,' said the evangelist. 'There is a yellow ribbon on the apple tree. In fact, there's far more than one. Every branch is hanging with yellow ribbons, scores and scores of them. Your parents love you that much, they want you to come home.'

This seems to be very appropriate for the week in which we will hear the parable of the Prodigal Son.

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski

