



Fra Angelico: Annunciation (c. 1395-1455)

## Contemplate the Word of God and Delight in it

By Veronica Arntz

In many paintings of the Annunciation, our Blessed Mother is depicted reading or having an open book on her lap, as in Fra Angelico's frescoes or Rogier van der Weyden's paintings. What we see in the Blessed Mother is attentiveness to the word of God, which will become flesh in her womb: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14, RSV). On this feast of the Annunciation, we ought to take the time to consider our contemplative Blessed Mother, who was open to receiving the Word, and ask ourselves if we are open to receiving the Word in our hearts.

Aristotle tells us that the highest human action is contemplation, which is an act that leads man outside himself to contemplate the eternal and unchanging things. Contemplation is one of the ways that we are able to learn about God, but the Blessed Mother's act of contemplation is much deeper, because she contemplated the word of God day and night (Psalm 1:2). It is said that Mary knew the Scriptures so well that they took flesh in her womb in Christ. She "is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither" (Psalm 1:3). From the Blessed Mother came forth the shoot of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1), Jesus Christ, who came to save all men from sin. Because of the Blessed Mother's attentiveness to the Word, she conceived the Word so that He could bring salvation to all.

When the angel greets the Blessed Mother, "Hail, full of grace" (Luke 1:28), "she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be" (Luke 1:29). Why is Mary troubled by this saying? She knows that this has never been said in the Scriptures before, and so she is troubled that the angel would come to her with such a greeting. Even still, she considers within herself what sort of greeting this might be: as Pope Benedict XVI comments, this points to "her inner engagement with the word." Mary is well aware of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, having contemplated the Scriptures so deeply. She is therefore ready, willing, and open to giving her response to the angel: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Mary accepts the word of the angel; she accepts the proclamation of God; she receives the Word of God into her heart, such that he becomes incarnate within her womb. As Benedict XVI further comments, "It is the moment of free, humble yet magnanimous obedience in which the loftiest choice of human freedom is made." In contrast with the disobedience of Adam and Eve, who did not ponder the word of God in their hearts and chose to turn away from God, Mary's act of contemplation leads her to obedience to the Word.

Each of us is called to contemplate the word of God and take delight in it, just like the man of Psalm 1. In the dictatorship of noise present in our culture, how often do we sit down to contemplate the word of God, so that we might take it wholly into our hearts and make our wills one with God's will? On this feast of the Annunciation, we should pray to our Blessed Mother, so that we might have the grace to receive the Word as she did, whatever our state of life might be. We are all called to receive the Word of God and keep it—"My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word of God and do it"—and if we do, then we will be made sons and daughters of God. If we keep the word of God, we will be imitating our Blessed Mother, who carried the Word of God beneath her heart; let us learn to imitate her that we might carry the Word of God in our own hearts.

www.catholicexchange.com

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### MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday: 5pm  
(Anticipated Mass)  
Sunday: 9am, 11am & 5pm  
Monday – Wednesday 8am  
Thursday Mass/Novena:  
8am & 7pm  
Friday, Saturday, Holidays: 9am  
(Fridays in July & August: 8am)  
Children's Mass: 9am 1st  
Sunday of the month Oct-June  
Children's Liturgy: 11am  
All Sundays except the 1st  
Sunday from Sept- June  
Reconciliation  
Saturday: 4-4:45pm  
Adoration  
Saturday 9:30-10am  
Library Hours  
Sunday: 10-10:45am, 4:30-5pm

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9am-4pm

### STAFF

#### Pastor

Babu Mathew, CSsR

#### Associate Pastor

Joseph Horo, CSsR

#### In Residence

William Comerford, CSsR

#### Office Manager

Virginia Fong

#### Pastoral Coordinator

Bertilla Watanabe

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## OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

March 24, 2019

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent

## Archbishop Miller: An Inspiring Visit and Cause of Great Hope

Dear Parishioners,

Last week was a milestone in the history of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish. It was the occasion of Archbishop Michael Miller's Pastoral Visit in which he met a record number of parishioners, volunteers and staff. The visit was part of his plan to gain greater insight into the workings of all 79 parishes of the Archdiocese of Vancouver. It is indeed the first time a bishop has done such a thorough evaluation of all aspects of the financial, administrative, and spiritual life of this faith community as well as a survey of our church and its environs.

The 4-day visit began with meetings on Thursday evening, two days of back-to-back meetings on Friday and Saturday and closed with Sunday Eucharist. All in, I counted 28 meetings, 3 supper gatherings, 3 coffee meetings and 3 Masses. My estimate is that he met with 260 people including our big group of altar servers and school staff.

In his 9am Sunday Mass homily, the Archbishop said: "The past few days have been very busy as I was able to get together with volunteers from nearly every group and ministry that give life to your parish. During these meetings, I listened to all that you are doing, as well to your hopes for the future and the challenges you are facing. I also learned about the creative ways in which you carry out your ministries that I can share with other parishes when I visit them."

"This experience of meeting and talking with so many people who are engaged in the life of your parish family has been both inspiring and a cause of great hope for the future of the Catholic Church in Vancouver. You should be proud that with God's grace, your community is flourishing under the shepherding guidance of your beloved pastor, Fr Babu and his assistant Fr. Joseph, with the helping and steady hand of Fr. Bill."

Archbishop Miller, in his commentary on the Gospel of the Transfiguration, also mentioned it is important for us to "take the time every day to go up the mountain with Jesus... find a place of silence, a place of prayer, so as to hear his voice. Listen to him first of all in your heart but also listen to Jesus in his written Word in the Gospels. If you haven't made a Lenten resolution yet, think about reading one of the Gospels between now and Easter."

My dear friends, the endorsement of the Archbishop was indeed reassuring. No doubt, it is God's grace and the work of all our dedicated parishioners which makes all this possible. I would like to thank again all who made this visit such a fruitful one for us. We benefited tremendously from our conversations with the Archbishop. The ministry coordinators and I took notes as he shared his insights and suggestions. We will be receiving a fuller report from his office in a few months.

May our Blessed Mother help us contemplate the Paschal mystery as we continue our prayers and contemplation of our journey towards Easter.

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Babu Mathew, C.Ss.R



The Lord is merciful and gracious. - Psalm 103

**Weekly Collection:** Sunday Mass Offering Mar 16 & 17: \$4,890.35. St. Joseph's Society \$147.00. Offering for the Needy: \$1,043.00. Catholic Press \$25.00. Initial Offering \$50.00 Share Lent: \$20.00. Security System Donation: \$200.00. Thank you for your faith-filled generosity.

**OLPH Parish Centennial Development Plan Info Session:** Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish is prayerfully planning a major development plan which will usher a new era of growth and sustainability for our parish community. An information session will be held on Saturday April 6 at 3pm in the Parish Hall. All are welcome to attend.

**Lenten Study:** On Fridays of Lent after the Stations of the Cross, we will be screening Bishop Robert Barron's *Conversion: Following the Call of Christ*. Stations of the Cross start at 7pm. The 20 min video screening will follow soon after.

**Penitential Service:** Join us for a Penitential Service in preparation for Easter on Sunday April 7 at 2pm. There will be visiting priests available for the service.

**CWL Meeting:** There will be no CWL Meeting in March. Our next meeting is on Wednesday April 24 at 7:30pm in the Madonna Room.

**Spring Break:** OLPH School is closed for Spring Break March 18 – 29.

**Family Mass Helpers:** The next Family Mass is on Sunday April 7. If you would like to volunteer to help with this Mass, please email Agata at kroondyk@aquinas.org or Heather (hleachsage@gmail.com) for coffee/food and hospitality, or Melina (melinaivanovic@gmail.com) for choir.

**Church Washrooms:** For security reasons, the church washrooms will be locked after weekday Masses until further notice.

**Lenten Prayer Series:** Half-hour Lenten Prayer Series on Wednesdays at noon. Soup & bread offered after most gatherings. Mar 27 – St. Anselm's Anglican, 5210 University Blvd. | Apr 3 – Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic, 2465 Crown St. | Apr 10 – West Point Grey Baptist Church, 4509 W. 11 Ave.

**Share Lent:** Find out more about this year's Share Lent Campaign on devp.org. If you would like to help with this D&P campaign, please contact Deirdre dmswebster@gmail.com.

**Retrouaille Vancouver Spring Program:** Is Your Marriage in Crisis? Repair your marriage, rediscover romance and gain the tools you need for healthy, loving communication! Retrouaille is a Catholic peer ministry which offers a three-phase program for married couples with difficulties of all kinds, including years of misery, infidelity, separation, or even divorce. It is not too late! For confidential information or to register for the program beginning the weekend of April 5-7, call Marc and Candice at 604-530-6710 and leave a message or email us at vancouverbc@retrouaille.org. More information also available on our websites www.retrouaille.org.

**Permanent Diaconate Information Sessions:** Do you feel called to be a Permanent Deacon? Men between the ages of 35 and 60 interested in ordained ministry, along with their spouses, can learn more about the permanent diaconate this spring. The Permanent Diaconate Office is hosting information sessions this April and May in Vancouver and Langley. For more information, or to register, please visit <http://stmarkscollege.ca/news-events/events/permanent-diaconate-information-sessions/> or email [deacons@rcav.org](mailto:deacons@rcav.org).

## Stewardship Reflection

*"He said to the gardener, 'For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree but have found none.'" (Luke 13:7)*

We can all be like the barren fig tree at times. Do you cling to what you have or do you generously share with others? How will you respond when God asks you what you have done with all the gifts He has given you? Remember, not only are we called to be generous, we are called to develop and nurture our gifts and return with increase.

Stewardship Office, Archdiocese of St. Louis

## Archbishop: Three Blessings of OLPH Parish

By Bertilla Watanabe

Archbishop Michael Miller's visit to our parish was an occasion of joy and great excitement for OLPH ministry members and coordinators. There was some anxiety initially but as hour after hour, and meeting after meeting progressed, the word got around that the bishop was an eager listener, understanding of the challenges, quick to share ideas and appreciative of their efforts.

Archbishop Miller remarked that he was very grateful for the warm hospitality and the efforts of those who made sacrifices to be present at meetings especially as it was the start of Spring Break.

In his homily at the 9am Mass with the whole parish, Archbishop Miller said there are three blessings we have as a parish family that he thought worthy of note.

### Redemptorist Charism

"First of all, this is a parish where the Redemptorist charism which combines true devotion, especially to Our Lady and to the Lord's living presence in the Blessed Sacrament, with outreach and action in the world is present. Faith in action is evident here at OLPH. The newly formed Redemptorist Associates and the upcoming pilgrimage to places dear to them, as well as a deepening appreciation of the relevance of the spirituality of St Alphonsus mark your parish in a unique way."

### Outstanding School

"Secondly, you are blessed to have an outstanding school as an essential ministry within your parish. I say "within" your parish because it is not accurate to speak of the parish and the school as two separate institutions or communities. There are two buildings, a school and a church but the school is integral to the parish community. It is the *parish* school. Your school is flourishing because of the extraordinary way in which it is carrying its mission as an evangelizing community which is intentional in fostering in the students a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, a Catholic world view and a way of life patterned on the Gospel. I want to thank the Principal, Mrs. Clarke, the teachers and staff with whom I enjoyed a wonderful conversation. The Mass I celebrated on Friday morning with the children gave me ample proof, if any were needed, that you should be very proud of your Catholic school.

### Sharing of Gifts and Talents

"Thirdly, it is certainly the Lord's work in your midst that so many of you are putting your gifts and talents at the service of other parishioners, as well as to a large number in the wider community, indeed even across the globe. The dedication of those who continue to serve year after year bears witness to your love for your parish."

After relating the list of all the committees and ministries he met, Archbishop Miller said: "What a grace-filled community you are! Continue to expand your ministries, inviting ever more parishioners to share in your work, especially those who are younger and not yet as fully involved as those who have found a home here for many years. How to welcome new members to your ministries and the need to plan for the future are both necessary to ensure a flourishing future."

He concluded his message by saying, "Dear friends, continue to live the teaching of Jesus in your blessed parish. Let us pray with gratitude for all that God has done for this parish family at OLPH and ask him to strengthen our resolve to live as disciples in a world which needs the light of Jesus and God's Word so that it will come to know the fullness of life our Saviour came to give us."



## Redemptorist Pilgrimage: May 2-14

As part of our 150th Jubilee Icon of Love celebrations, the Redemptorists all over the world have organized several pilgrimages to visit the actual icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, places where St Alphonsus and St Gerard Majella lived and prayed as well as other places of interest in Italy.

The cost of the trip is \$4800. Arrangements can be made for pre-authorized payments as well. For more information about the pilgrimage, please contact Brian or Deon [royaleorchid@shaw.ca](mailto:royaleorchid@shaw.ca) or call Brian 778-999-4599 / 778-866-8118.



### 12-DAY ITINERARY

Day 01: May 02 2019 - Canada to Rome / Naples

Day 02 May 03 - Arrive in Rome – Marianella – Naples

Day 03: May 04 - Pompeii – Amalfi Coast

Day 04: May 05 - Excursion to Scala

Day 05: May 06 - Sites of St. Alphonsus and St. Gerard Majella

Day 06: May 07 - Amalfi – Montecassino – Rome

Day 7: May 08 - Papal Audience – Holy Doors of Rome – Relics of Jerusalem

Day 8: May 09 - Rome (Vatican)

Day 9: May 10 - Assisi – Sites of St. Francis and St. Clare

DAY 10: May 11 - Pisa – Padua

DAY 11: May 12 – Venice – St. Mark's Square - Murano Glass Factory

DAY 12: May 13 – Goodbye Italy