

- A quick apologetics note: In a place in the Gospels Jesus says: “...*call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.*” (Matthew 23:9), and many of our non-Catholic Christian brethren criticize Catholics for calling priests “Father”.
- They might seem to have a good point, but then one wonders why the Archangel Gabriel would tell Mary today: “...*the Lord God will give [Jesus] the throne of David his father...*” ...or when Jesus Himself uses the word “father” to refer earthly fathers, as in “...*a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.*” (Matthew 19:5)
- Those are just some of many indications that Jesus, in that particular passage, is speaking figuratively, not literally. If you read the whole passage in context, He was rather warning of Pharisees who sought honors and glory for themselves, usurping such honor from God Himself.
- Priests (hopefully) are called “father” for leading their flocks in faith—by their presence, teaching, encouraging, correcting, admonishing, feeding with the sacraments—as St. Paul describes himself: “...*I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*” (1 Corinthians 4:15)
- So we see that Jesus’ prohibition against the very word “father” is not literal, but against self-glorification, for all glory is God’s.

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- Now our readings today touch largely on three aspects of the faith.
 - First of all...that the coming of Jesus fulfills a promise of God made a millennium before—His promise to His beloved, King David, that David’s son would reign forever.
 - Of course, David and the hearers of those promises prior to Jesus’ coming could not have imagined how powerfully this would finally play out—that God’s own divine Son would also be David’s son...not by flesh, but through adoption by Joseph—a descendant of David, whom the angel calls “Son of David”.

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- Secondly, the miraculous conception of Jesus in Mary’s virginal womb...and thus He truly is not only Son of David by that

adoption, but absolutely first and foremost the Son of God... “*by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary*” as we’ll say in the Creed in a few moments.

- Some non-Catholic Christian denominations apparently do not require belief in the virginal conception of Jesus—even though the Gospel specifically describes it.
 - But the virginal conception of Jesus is foundational to theology of Jesus as Son of God...as Savior and Redeemer of humanity...else He is simply another man, and thus incapable of taking on Himself the sins of all mankind; that requires the infinite divinity.
 - The error is a common error of our time—that if we cannot conceive (no pun intended) of how something happened, it cannot have happened...that the so-called miracles of God in scripture must really have a normal and natural explanation.
 - That absolute rationalism seeks to “un-divinize” God, and makes scripture little more than legend...making God a superstition rather than a reality...and thus Christianity a moralistic tale and quaint philosophy of life rather than obliging truth.
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 - One can’t help but wonder what else would be dismissed—the Annunciation, the Incarnation...the Resurrection?, without which Christianity would be an empty shell.
 - One wonders, then, why the apostles and others would go on and give their lives for something they would have known was untrue.
 - And we remember that Luke, our author, was a disciple of St. Paul, and likely met with the apostles who knew both Jesus and Mary—St. John, especially, whom Jesus had entrusted with, and lived with, Mary...and thus, no doubt, heard much from her. In fact, many theorize that, because of some of the wording in his Gospel, Luke may have even spoken with Mary herself.
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- Much else could be said on that topic, but I want to touch on a third thing—the essential—indeed, vital—virtue of humility.

- In our account of the Annunciation today, we see that Mary had this virtue in the highest degree—acquiescing to the will of God without hesitation.
- Her question “*How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?*” is not doubting what seems impossible, but rather a question: “Is there something she need do?”
- Mary is *offered* her role...and her acceptance is voluntary. And she has every earthly reason NOT to accept it...for to become pregnant before living with her betrothed Joseph is risking being outcast from society...even being stoned to death.
- Yet...all other considerations are laid aside, for it is God who asks.
- And so...without complaint or argument or excuse, she accepts the will and wish of God for her...not objecting: “But my reputation!”... “But the danger to my very life if accused as an adulteress!”... “But...how inconvenient that will be for me! That’s not MY plan for my life!”
- No...simply: “*I am the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to THY will.*” A proclamation of love, fidelity and trust from her beautiful and Immaculate Heart...
- ...very much as her Son would say to the Father thirty years later: “*THY will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven...*”...and “*Not my will, but thine be done.*”
- So let us—like Mary...like Jesus—always seek to be faithful to the will of the Father, which is the will of Jesus...trusting Him in all circumstances...humble and faithful servants, with eyes always fixed on the final and ultimate coming of His kingdom...
- ...for “*...the virgin shall be with child and bear a son*”...and “*He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High...and of his kingdom there will be no end.*”

Reading 1 [2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16](#)

When King David was settled in his palace,
and the LORD had given him rest from his enemies on every side,
he said to Nathan the prophet,

“Here I am living in a house of cedar,
while the ark of God dwells in a tent!”

Nathan answered the king,
“Go, do whatever you have in mind,
for the LORD is with you.”

But that night the LORD spoke to Nathan and said:

“Go, tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD:
Should you build me a house to dwell in?’

“It was I who took you from the pasture
and from the care of the flock
to be commander of my people Israel.
I have been with you wherever you went,
and I have destroyed all your enemies before you.
And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth.
I will fix a place for my people Israel;
I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place
without further disturbance.
Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old,
since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel.
I will give you rest from all your enemies.
The LORD also reveals to you
that he will establish a house for you.
And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors,
I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins,
and I will make his kingdom firm.
I will be a father to him,
and he shall be a son to me.
Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me;
your throne shall stand firm forever.”

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29](#)

R. (2a) For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

The promises of the LORD I will sing forever;
through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness.
For you have said, “My kindness is established forever”;
in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

“I have made a covenant with my chosen one,

I have sworn to David my servant:
Forever will I confirm your posterity
and establish your throne for all generations.”

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

“He shall say of me, ‘You are my father,
my God, the Rock, my savior.’
Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him,

and my covenant with him stands firm.”

R. For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

Reading II [Rom 16:25-27](#)

Brothers and sisters:

To him who can strengthen you,
according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ,
according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages
but now manifested through the prophetic writings and,
according to the command of the eternal God,
made known to all nations to bring about **the obedience of faith,**
to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ
be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel [Lk 1:26-38](#)

The angel Gabriel was sent from God
to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,
to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph,
of the house of David,
and the virgin's name was Mary.
And coming to her, he said,
“Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.”
But she was greatly troubled at what was said
and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.
Then the angel said to her,
“Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favor with God.

“Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall name him Jesus.
He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,
and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his kingdom there will be no end.”
But Mary said to the angel,
“How can this be,
since I have no relations with a man?”
And the angel said to her in reply,
“The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore the child to be born
will be called holy, the Son of God.
And behold, Elizabeth, your relative,
has also conceived a son in her old age,
and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;
for nothing will be impossible for God.”
Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
May it be done to me according to your word.”
Then the angel departed from her.