



# The Gift of Annunciation

Reflection by Fr. Peter Schuessler, SDS

On March 25th I have a tradition of playing Christmas music. Why? Because that is the feast date of the *Solemnity of the Annunciation*, when the Angel Gabriel brought Mary news of God's choice to make her the mother of the Savior. This feast day not only marks nine months before Christmas but also celebrates God's plan to enter the world and live as one of us.

The *Annunciation* event has a special meaning for us Salvatorians who are called to make the Savior known to all. You might say we are obliged to carry on the *Annunciation* event by spreading awareness of the Savior's presence in our own and others' lives. As God's people, we are all given small moments of annunciation. Here are a few examples, starting with a very simple and personal one.

During a 'Catechism' class in my youth, I was called out by the sister for a disturbance I had caused from the back of the classroom. She shared how disappointed she was with my behavior, saying, "After all, you have the face of a priest." Could this have been an annunciation? Perhaps. Something like an invitation must have been planted that eventually led me to the priesthood.

While reading and reflecting on any literature, we may encounter a word or phrase that can suddenly enlighten us about God's presence. This is especially true in the practice of *Lectio Divina*, a slow, prayerful reading of the Scriptures.

Nature is also a source of annunciations. How often do we pause to marvel at the color of a sunset, the melody of a bird's chirp, or some other offering from nature?

Just as the *Annunciation* brought Jesus into Mary's life, so our smaller annunciations bring to light God's presence in our own lives. Sadly, we can easily take these kinds of moments for granted and without reflection. Some of us might miss these moments completely and wonder why God's presence feels lacking. Reflection on Mary's *Annunciation* can help us cultivate a greater spiritual awareness. Just as with Mary, these moments often come at unexpected times and from surprising sources. They can be affirming: "Hail full of grace! The Lord is with you." At the same time, they can be challenging: "How can this be since I have no relations with a man?" Like the Blessed Mother, we must eventually choose whether to accept God's invitation. When we say yes, then we become a little more of the person whom God created us to be.

In the Divine Savior,

Fr. Peter Schuessler, SDS



**Fr. Peter Schuessler, SDS**

Fr. Peter has served as USA Provincial, Vicar Provincial and Formation Director. Currently he is semi-retired, continuing spiritual direction and serving in various capacities. Additionally, he has been invited to Rome to be part of a special commission exploring the identity and mission of the Salvatorians.

