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## Annunciation 2020

### *Hebrews 2:11-18 & Luke 1:24-38*

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On December 25 of each year, we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Back up nine months from that date, and we arrive at today, March 25. On this day the BVM discovers she is with child and the day when celebrate the annunciation.

Originally the Annunciation was a feast of our Lord, commemorating His mysterious birth on Christmas day. Later, after a proper evaluation of the Blessed Virgin's role in the mystery of the incarnation, they felt it was necessary to celebrate the feast on March 25, as a Marian feast.

But there were liturgical difficulties in celebrating the feast on that day. Ordinarily, March 25 coincided with the Lenten season, during which all festive celebrations were forbidden by the Council of Laodicea (can. 51). Therefore, the feast of the Annunciation continued to be celebrated during Advent as a liturgical preparation for Christmas. So, the emphasis of the feast was placed on the incarnation of our Lord.

Well, after the recognition of the Blessed Virgin as the Mother of God by the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., Mary's role in the work of salvation came to the foreground. By the sixth century the emphasis shifted to Mary and the feast of the Annunciation. It was recognized as the Marian feast to be celebrated with no exception, on March 25. When the Council of Trullo, celebrated it in 692 A.D., it did override the previous prohibition and decreed the solemn celebration of the feast of Annunciation with the Divine Liturgy on March 25, even if it coincided with Holy Week (can. 52).

Today's Gospel reading tell us about the announcement. The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her she would have a son. So, on that day, or near that day, Mary became pregnant. And the baby developed in her womb. His conception was different, unlike any in all of history. But his gestation time was like that of any other baby. At first, he was just a tiny little embryo, no larger than a grain of salt. At three weeks, his tiny heart began to beat. At four weeks, his backbone and arms and legs took shape. By the twelfth week, he was sleeping and waking, and exercising his muscles. At about thirty-eight weeks, he was developed and ready to be born.

Even then, the developmental process continued. He started as a helpless infant, just like the rest of us. Then he became a little boy, then a pre-adolescent, then a teenager, and finally a young man. It took a long time for the baby Jesus to become the man whom the whole world admires. From the day of his conception to the day of his birth, approximately nine months transpired. And from the day of his birth to the beginning of his public ministry, about thirty years went by. What was he doing all that time? The surest answer is that he was becoming the man he was meant to be. These are called "the silent years". They had to be that. You cannot hear roots growing. All worthwhile things take time to develop.

The feast of the Annunciation reveals to us the mystery from all eternity. The Son of God becomes the Son of Man that, by sharing in what was our worst, He may make us share in what was the best. In the old times Adam was deceived; he desired to become like God but failed. Now God becomes man that He may make Adam like God. So, let all the creation rejoice and let the nature exult, because the Archangel stands before the Virgin in awe and, by greeting her 'Rejoice', changes our sorrow into joy.

Amen!