

# 32. Yes



Today, the Church remembers the moment a young Jewish girl received an astonishing message. The story courses so comfortably through our cultural DNA that we too easily cease to be amazed. God would inhabit her womb?

George Hitchcock's Annunciation (1887) is unusual because no angel is visible. There's no mistaking the lilies, though! Mary, depicted as a Dutch peasant girl, stands in a field of them, an innocent lily herself in a soft cloud-blue dress and ethereal head covering. There is humility here and Mary's eyes are lowered. The message has been given. The lilies are luminous with it. Hitchcock has captured, as Denise Levertov puts it, "the minute no one speaks of when she could still refuse".

What would she say? Would she have the courage to fall in with the divine plan? Or not? Luke tells us her response: "*Let it be with me according to your word*" (1.38) Or, in other words, "Yes"!

Perhaps the angel's absence makes it easier to imagine ourselves into this same northern European flower-field. What 'yes' is God asking of us? For in some very real sense we are all called to be Marys, called to bear the divine in the ordinary humanity of our lives, to cradle and cherish it, to bring it to birth in our living and loving.

## Today...

...as we thank you for Mary's 'Yes',  
strengthen us, O God, for our own.

**Amen**