

Easter before Easter, the Annunciation of the Resurrection (Father Nikolaos Patsalos)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



This year, the 5th Sunday in Lent coincided with the great feast of the Mother of God, her Annunciation. We'd left the middle of Lent the previous Sunday, that of John of the Ladder, and, instead of the 5th being centred on the great desert ascetic, Saint Mary the Egyptian, the day is devoted to the most beautiful of women, the pride and joy of the Church, the All-Pure Mother and Virgin. There is no way in which this feast removes us from the spirit of Lent and of preparation for Easter. On the contrary, it's the best precursor for Easter, since the Annunciation and the Resurrection illumine each other.

Before Easter comes, we celebrate an Easter of the Mother of God. As an event, the Annunciation is a necessary condition for the Resurrection. The total defeat of the most wicked devil is achieved through the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection. But the crushing of the Evil One begins with the person of Our Lady, through her consent to bear God. The way the Word of God came to dwell in Our Lady's womb

really is a miracle beyond understanding, an inexplicable mystery which heralds the salvation of the human race.



In short, the Annunciation is the starting-point for the great mystery which will culminate in the cross and its life-giving message. It's the beginning of the end of death. By accepting the call to be the Mother of God, Our Lady became a collaborator in this good message, in order that we might experience the even greater and supreme good news: the abolition of death. Death, as the greatest enemy of human life, is abolished. And where Eve missed the mark [in Greek, the real meaning of 'sin'] and gave death a way into our lives, Our Lady then came as the new Eve to redress the error of the first by giving birth to the new Adam, Who is Christ. So the Annunciation is balm for the wound of the First-Created, who lived with the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit. The Mother of God redeems Eve from the pain of her tears and Christ heeds and forgives Adam's lament.

Painful though the fall of Adam and Eve was, it didn't defeat God's mercy. Even at the very time of their fall, God, because of His nature, couldn't be a vengeful punisher. This is why He never leaves anyone in despair or sorrow. Even at the very time of the fall He sent 'a message of joy'. In the Genesis narrative, God addresses the devil's tool, the serpent, and tells it that He'll sow enmity between it and a woman, demonstrating straight away the beginning of His work of salvation.

Naturally, the woman who triumphed over the devil was Our Lady, before whom all the powers of the other side fear and tremble.

So what does the feast of the Annunciation have to offer us in the middle of Lent? A very great deal. In the struggle for good which we're engaged in, Our Lady's our mother and comforter in the pain and sorrow of the wretchedness of our sins. She's our guide in our spiritual struggle, giving us an example of how to live which will ensure that we avoid the cunning traps of the devil.

The good news which Our Lady brings us through her Annunciation is the advent of the Doctor of the world's ills, of the body and the soul. Sin remains and attacks those who are spiritually sick as an illness. But Our Lady carried and bore the Doctor Who gives us the healing medication of repentance. Sin is an illness, Christ's the Doctor and repentance is the cure. So let's avoid the thinking of the first Eve and let's adopt the outlook of the second. The openness of Our Lady saves, because it works towards the perfection of humility and submission to the will of her Son. May the grace of Our Lady overshadow us so that we don't come naked to the bridal chamber at Easter.