

# “Justice For Laura” Novena - 9 Days of Prayer

Day Six



## **Scripture Passage: “The Annunciation”**

“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the angel, “How shall this be, since I have no husband?” And the angel said to her, “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, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing

will be impossible.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.” -LUKE 1:26-38

### **Meditation:**

Biblical scholars for two thousand years have recognized that Mary is a sort of archetype for the Church and also for the whole human race. She was and is, of course, an utterly unique human person in salvation history precisely due to the fact that she gave birth to the Son of God, but nevertheless the early fathers of the Church insisted that we have much to learn about ourselves and about humanity from the Virgin Mary in the Gospel narratives.

The Paschal Mystery – the passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ – is the price for our salvation and redemption. But in some way the whole thing started right here, at the Annunciation. Mary gave her consent to God's proposal BEFORE “the Word was made flesh,” and so in some sense we owe a debt of gratitude to that little Jewish virgin who had so much faith in and love for God that she boldly proclaimed herself to be the handmaid of the Lord. Of course, in the natural order of things all humans are the handmaids of the Lord simply because of the hierarchy of existence: God is infinitely higher than we are, and therefore we are, by our very nature and being, subject to Him. But God is also a gentleman – He never forces our hand at anything, but simply offers his gift of love freely and awaits our acceptance and return of love. Mary, acting in the name of all humanity, accepted the gift of love that God proposed to her; she opened herself so profoundly to God's gift that the same love was made flesh in her womb. She conceived the love of God within her precisely because she had received that love, and she was only able to receive that free gift of love because she believed in the gift!

God wants to give His gift of love to all of us, but we cannot receive it unless we truly believe that He is offering. The gift of love that He offers is Himself! Jesus Christ! GOD IS LOVE, and He gives himself to us in a free and total self-donation of love which is beyond our scope of understanding but believed in by our faith. And in this free gift of love, the Incarnation is repeated in each and every Christian in and through their conversion to Christ – and this is how Mary teaches us, in some way, what it means to be human! To be a fully alive human being is to be open and receptive to God's gift of love, to receive that gift of love, and then receiving, to conceive the gift of God's love within us and bear it forth to the world! Of course, this is more poetic language for us, as we will not literally conceive Christ as Mary did, but we ARE meant to conceive His Love within us so that we may “incarnate” that love in our own lives and bear that love forth to all the world. But we must first receive! Christ told us to love as he loves, but before he said that he also told us to first abide in his love. Abiding in His love requires a total surrender of ourselves to God, it requires us to proclaim in unison with Mary,

“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.” This takes a tremendous amount of trust on our part, but if we are submissive to God He will gratuitously pour out His love upon us and we will conceive divine life and love within, and become empowered through that gift of God's love to share it with others. We will be empowered to love rightly and truly, in total self-donation and self-giving. And we will be utterly filled with the fullness of God's love which is nothing short of a blissful ecstasy - an explosion of Trinitarian love beyond the power of words to describe. God is yearning for us to say “yes” to His love!! If we say yes, we conceive the love of Christ within our own hearts and we are brought into the transforming union of love between God and our own soul, and in turn we become shining beacons of hope and love in the world which reveals the love of Christ – we are made able to fulfill Christ's command to love as He loves, and to become perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. We become, ever so gradually but nonetheless truly, perfect in love.

The opposite of love is NOT hatred. Love is essentially the free, total, faithful, fruitful gift of self; the opposite of that would not be hatred, but it would be using another person for our own selfish end. USE, not hatred, is the diametrical opposite of love. Laura's murderer is well acquainted with this too, for he used Laura for his own selfish end – treated her as a thing, as a means to his end, and an expendable one at that; and going even beyond the horrific act of discarding the used expendable thing, he actually destroyed it. He destroyed her. He murdered her... This entire series of events constitutes the most severe and tragic degradation of a person – Laura was not a thing to be used, but a person, made in the image and likeness of God, to be loved. But her murderer is also a person made in the image and likeness of God, yet he acted horribly out of character. However, we can also say with the certainty of faith, that he would never have acted that way if he had received and conceived the Love of God. It was precisely the lack of God's love in his heart that permitted him to behave so incongruently with his own nature – as a man who is naturally made in the image of God, who is infinite love. We must pray fervently that this man would open himself to the Love of God, for we know that God never forces Himself upon anybody, but He can certainly “nudge” a person in the right direction with a flash of divine light which illumines the person's mind to the true nature of God as One who is holding out a free gift of infinite love. May the Holy Spirit send such a flash of divine light to this man, so starved for love, and may he, perceiving the gift, open himself to God's gift of love, which will be the necessary measure for his conversion.

***And we pray for Justice For Laura.***

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**Abba, Father,**

**You have revealed Yourself as the God of Love Who desires all Your children to be saved, and Who will run to embrace any soul who sincerely turns back to You.**

**We lift up the soul of Laura's killer, Your beloved child who has wandered in a far away land squandering the inheritance which You, his most Loving Father, have bestowed upon him. We beg the Holy Spirit to sing Your song of Love into his heart. Speak to his soul of his dignity and beauty as Your child, and give him the confidence to turn back to You in trust and repentance.**

**We ask this through the infinite merits of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Mercy Whose compassion knows no bounds.**

**Amen.**

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