

# Dear Padre,

## Does the Bible say that Mary was in her sixth month of pregnancy at the Annunciation?

The announcement of Jesus' birth in Luke begins, "In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph...and the virgin's name was Mary" (Luke 1:26–27). This Scripture passage taken out of context could possibly give the impression that "in the sixth month" refers to Mary. However, it refers to Mary's cousin Elizabeth, who was in the sixth month of her pregnancy with John the Baptist. The proper context is a few verses before this one that reads, "Elizabeth conceived, and she went into seclusion for five months" (Luke 1:24).



Regarding Mary's pregnancy, at the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel tells her, "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.... 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" (Luke 1:31, 35). Gabriel also informs Mary, "And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren" (Luke 1:36).

In general, women already in their sixth month of pregnancy would likely be aware of their condition, and it would not be easy to conceal from others. ●

Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR / DearPadre.org

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
December 15	December 16	December 17	December 18	December 19	December 20	December 21
Advent Weekday	Advent Weekday	Advent Weekday	Advent Weekday	Advent Weekday	Advent Weekday	Fourth Sunday of Advent
Nm 24:2–7, 15–17a	Zep 3:1–2, 9–13	Gn 49:2, 8–10	Jer 23:5–8	Jgs 13:2–7, 24–25a	Is 7:10–14 Lk 1:26–38	Is 7:10–14 Rom 1:1–7 Mt 1:18–24
Mt 21:23–27	Mt 21:28–32	Mt 1:1–17	Mt 1:18–25	Lk 1:5–25		



### A WORD FROM POPE LEO XIV

*There are many settings in which the Christian faith is considered absurd.... Yet, precisely for this reason, they are the places where our missionary outreach is desperately needed. A lack of faith is often tragically accompanied by the loss of meaning in life, the neglect of mercy, appalling violations of human dignity, the crisis of the family, and so many other wounds that afflict our society.*

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 9, 2025



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# Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 14, 2025

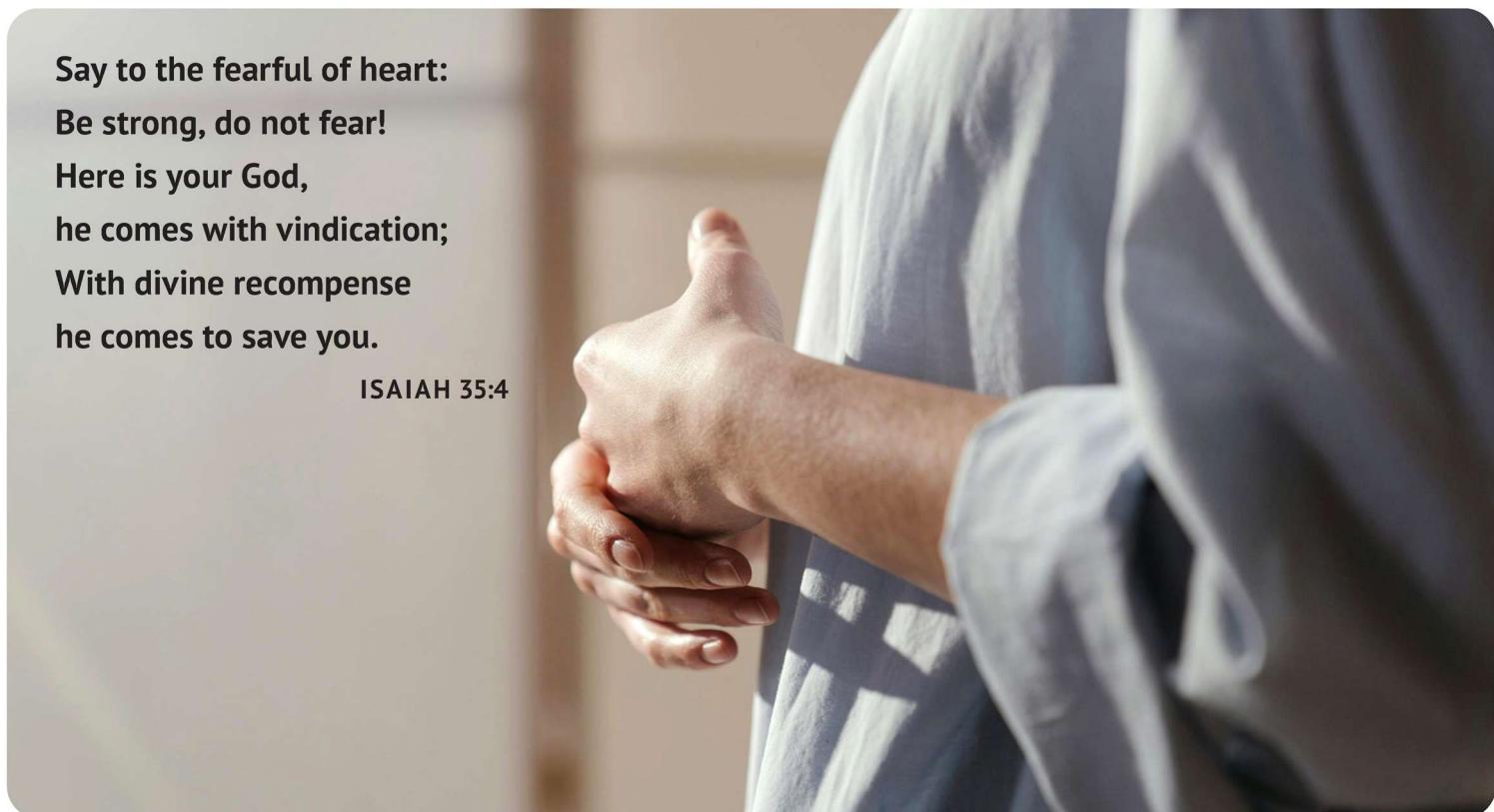
Third Sunday of Advent (A)

Isaiah 35:1–6a, 10 / James 5:7–10 / Matthew 11:2–11



**Say to the fearful of heart:  
Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God,  
he comes with vindication;  
With divine recompense  
he comes to save you.**

ISAIAH 35:4



## The Gift of Questions

FR. THOMAS M. SANTA, CSsR

**W**e sometimes imagine that a sign of a strong faith is firm conviction and freedom from doubt. However, despite our imaginings, the authentic experiences of saints and ordinary people alike seem to point in another direction. The question of John the Baptist today—"Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3)—suggests that John is filled with questions, and these are important questions because they are asked from the depths of King Herod's prison, which is not exactly the place of idle musings or concerns.

If John, who is a great saint and a man who encountered Jesus and witnessed the powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit at his baptism, can have a question, doesn't it suggest that questions are acceptable—perhaps even needed? Perhaps questioning is an indication of faithfulness, not a lack of faith. Questions do not suggest that something is missing; rather, they confirm that something is growing and developing. The Baptist could just have easily said, "Jesus, you are doing and saying more than I ever imagined possible. Please help me to understand," or, to quote an unnamed saint, "I do believe, help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

God will not shatter, and faith will not collapse, because you have questions or doubts.

Experience suggests that questions and doubts strengthen our belief and our commitment to a life of faith. ●



SCAN TO  
LEARN ABOUT  
AUTHOR  
FR. THOMAS M.  
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### Reflect

**Do I welcome questions, mine and others, as a way to grow in faith?**

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