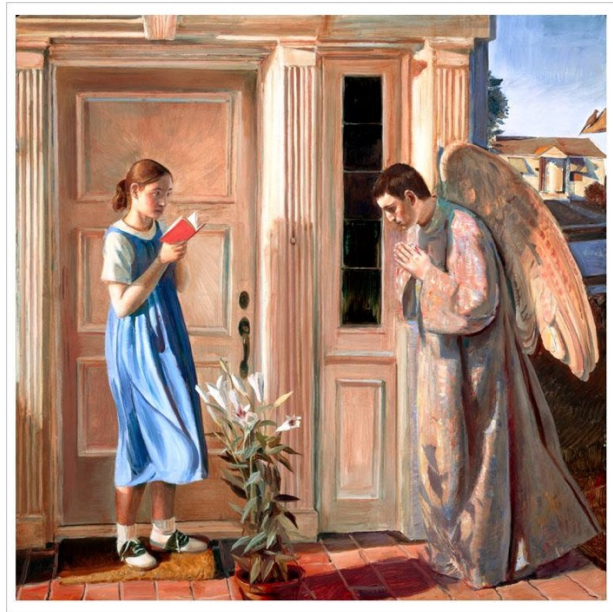


The Annunciation – 2024 Year B

Genesis 12:1-4; Ps 32:4-5; Timothy 1:8-10; Matt 17:1-9

Four years ago, at the beginning of Lent, everyone in my previous parish was offered a free copy of a booklet entitled: '33 days to Morning Glory', in order to prepare for their Consecration to Mary on the Feast day of the Annunciation that year. Since then I have repeated a short act of re-consecration every day. Why do I do this? Because of beauty.



There is a modern painting of the annunciation by John Collier called 2000: Annunciation. A young girl dressed in a blue simple blue dress is

standing on a mat in front of a door. She is holding a little book, and has apparently just been disturbed from reading it. She peers over the top of the book at an angle who is bowing reverently before her. Between them, in the foreground, in a pot, is a flowering lily plant which appears to have been just placed there by the angel: a gift.

There are lots of stunningly beautiful pictures of the Annunciation, but this one really catches my eye and imagination. The youth of the girl is well captured. The ordinariness of her surroundings evident. The angel seems out of place with his shimmering robe and wings. His hands pressed together in an attitude of prayer and his head slightly bowed conveys reverence. The Lilies stand between them. Yes, they are a gift. The lily stand for purity. They are a gift to her and a gift for us. In her purity Mary can say 'yes' to God. She says yes for you and me who struggle even in simple things to say a pure 'yes'. We stumble with our qualifications, and looking for catches, and advantages, we stumble in our fear of humiliation and failure. That 'yes' of Mary has such a terrible beauty. We can only look on in awe.

A young girl on her doorstep, surprised by God to give glory to God. Of course we love the Blessed Virgin Mary, because God the Father loves her. Or course we venerate her, because the Holy Spirit rests on her. Through her a path is laid out for us to find Christ and to be led home. And the angel still bows. And I still pray.

Mary, my mother, I give myself totally to you as your possession and property. Do with me in all that I am and have whatever most pleases you. Let me be a fit instrument in your immaculate and merciful hands to bring the greatest possible glory to God.