

A LETTER FROM FATHER DANIEL CARUSO

3/25/2020

Dear Friends,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Annunciation, when the angel Gabriel brought to Mary the joyful news that she was to bear God's Son into this world. In response to the angel's greeting, St. Luke tells us that Mary was "greatly troubled." That is when Gabriel tells her, "Do not be afraid." Do not be afraid; those words may have been spoken by Gabriel, but they came from God. I have often assumed that those words were spoken to Mary for that specific situation (imagine an angel appearing to you and sharing the message that Mary received). I have come to realize that those words were spoken not just to strengthen Mary at that moment, but for everything else that was to follow: traveling to visit her cousin Elizabeth, the journey to Jerusalem, giving birth in a stable, the strange news brought by the shepherds and the Magi, the prophecy of Simeon, the flight into Egypt, losing the young Jesus in Jerusalem, and then finally, the Passion and death of her Son. I am sure that in the midst of all those things, the Blessed Mother heard those words again and again: DO NOT BE AFRAID!

Mary is both a model and a Mother to us. We are going through a very difficult time in history and I think God is speaking those same words to us today: DO NOT BE AFRAID. The solemnity that we celebrate today is centered on the Incarnation, God made Flesh, coming to be with His people. He came to us in Love and he has promised never to abandon us. We may have questions about what is to happen, but so did Mary. Gabriel assured her that God had a plan and then reminded her that "nothing will be impossible for God." We must remember that ourselves and respond in Faith.

This is where I believe that the Blessed Mother is a powerful model for us. Having been assured that God has a plan and that nothing is impossible for God, Mary responds "May it be done to me according to your Word." With these words Mary entrusted herself to God and committed herself to seek nothing other than God's will. So it must be with us. Though the journey ahead may be difficult, we can take comfort in knowing that God is with us, finding our strength in Him who says to each of us: "Do not be afraid; I am Emmanuel, God with us. All things are possible in me. Trust me.

Love me as I love you.” May we respond as Mary did, with our words, with our actions, with our lives: “May it be done to me according to your Word.”

You are all in my prayers on this joyful day; please remember to pray for me.

In His Love, Fr. Caruso