

News anchors said again and again, today is the historic day as the first group of people rolled up their sleeves for corona vaccine, hopefully to save human beings from physical death.

About 2000 years ago there was another historic day for human salvation when Mary said Yes to angel Gabriel to save humankind from spiritual death. In today's Gospel reading we see how Mary responded to God.

Each year, throughout the Advent Season, three Biblical personalities dominate the liturgical stage. The first is Isaiah, whose prophecies describe in beautiful and soaring language the peace, justice, and joy of the Kingdom of God.

The second is John the Baptist, whose entire life and mission had but one purpose: to prepare the People of Israel for the coming of the Messiah. And the third is our Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary.

Mary appears in the liturgy toward the end of the Advent Season and of course, next to Jesus, she is the dominant character of the entire Christmas Season. In all of the familiar stories of the Advent and Christmas cycle – the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Birth of Christ, the Presentation in the Temple, the Visit of the Magi, and the Flight into Egypt – the spotlight shines on Mary.

That was one historic day more important than the current historic day. It was the D day for human salvation to save all humankind from spiritual death.

We have all come to take Mary's "yes" for granted.

Here is a question to think about: What if Mary had said "no" to the Angel? Surely, she could have said "no" – she still had the gift of free will when she was asked to be the Mother of God. God would not and didn't force her to become a puppet in His plan of salvation.

And Mary could have had some very good reasons to say “no.”

- 1st She probably didn't completely understand what was being asked of her. She could perhaps hardly understand the meaning of birds and the bees and now angel is telling her about virgin birth
- 2nd She could have considered herself unworthy of such a role. She was just a simple village girl perhaps illiterate without any ambitions.
- 3rd She could have realized that her acceptance of God's offer would completely disrupt her life – after all she was engaged to her beloved Joseph and both might have made some very definite plans about living a quiet and peaceful life as a typical wife and mother in the little town of Nazareth.

I also wonder what God would have done if Mary had said “no.” Would He have given her an opportunity to reconsider? Would God have chosen someone else for this role? I wonder who it would have been. And just maybe God would have found another way to accomplish our salvation. Perhaps our redemption would have been delayed indefinitely; maybe we would still be waiting for the Savior today.

Of course none of us will get a visit from angel Gabriel, But, just imagine if the angel Gabriel visited you today and asked you get involved more and more in parish activities, to start attending daily Mass, to speak about Christ in your workplace, to read the Bible more frequently, to contribute a greater amount to your church and charity, etc. What would be your answer?

Would your answer be “May it be done to me according to your word” or would it be a series of questions or excuses? As Pope John Paul II stated in his address on July 3, 1996, “Mary was asked to assent to a truth never expressed before (a virginal motherhood). She accepted it with a simple yet daring heart.” How do we respond to the comparatively minor tasks asked of us by the Lord? Do we accept willingly, or do we cite numerous reasons why it isn't possible? the Lord calls us. Have we responded to His call with the same willingness exhibited by Mary?