

He Made His Dwelling Among Us
The Annunciation and the Gospel of Life

The Annunciation celebrates the visit of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary to inform her that she was to be the mother of Jesus. On this great feast day, we not only recall Mary's courageous "yes" to God, we also celebrate the Incarnation of Christ, our Savior. For it was there, in the womb of a woman, nine months before the celebration of the manger, that "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14).

The celebration of the Annunciation coincides with the anniversary of the papal encyclical *Evangelium vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*). This prophetic document on the dignity and inviolability of every human life was put forth by Pope John Paul II on the Solemnity of the Annunciation in 1995. The intimate connection of these two events highlights a profound reality about the identity and value of every human person.

Luke's Gospel tells us that by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ would be conceived within the womb of Mary. It was there, in the womb of the Blessed Mother, that Christ first took on human flesh and made his dwelling among us. Like us, the unborn child Jesus grew and developed beneath the shelter of his mother's loving heart. Through Christ's Incarnation, God chose to share fully and intimately in our humanity and bridge all distance between God and man, so that we may dwell together.

The Church teaches us that "by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man."¹ God desired to dwell among us, as one of us, in order to bring us salvation. This truth "reveals to humanity not only the boundless love of God... but also the incomparable value of every human person."²

Each of us is made in the image and likeness of our Creator, to share in the very life of God himself. This reality "reveals the greatness and the inestimable value of human life."³ The human person is "a manifestation of God in the world, a sign of his presence, a trace of his glory."⁴ Created through the love of the Father, each one of us bears "an indelible imprint of God."⁵ By sharing in our humanity, Christ invites us to share in his divinity, that we might dwell with him for eternity.

Therefore, "the Gospel of God's love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a single and indivisible Gospel."⁶ Through Christ's descent to earth God desires to raise each one of us to the heights of heaven. May we recognize that to proclaim the Gospel of Life is to proclaim Christ, the one who *made his dwelling among us*.

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¹ Pope Paul VI, *Gaudium et spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1965), 22.

² Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), 2.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 34.

⁵ Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 35.

⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, 2.