

A Service for Lady Day, the Annunciation of our Lord

The liturgical colour for festivals of Mary is white, but as blue has been traditionally associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary, white vestments that include blue would be suitable. This might also be reflected by using blue and white flowers in decorations.

If you would like an interactive penitential rite, give a picture of a cross-section of an apple to each person as they arrive. If they wish, they could write something they are sorry about (for themselves or the world) on it, or just focus their thoughts on the apple picture. These could be exchanged for a picture of a rose (or a real rose!) during the prayers of penitence, as a sign of the new life that comes from the grace of God's forgiveness.

The Gathering

Explain to the congregation what they are going to do with the apple picture

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
And also with you

Today Gabriel announces God's dwelling on earth.
Together with him let us cry out loud
Let us rejoice, God is with us

Listening, like Mary, we open our minds
Let us rejoice, God is with us

Watching, like Mary, as God surprises us
Let us rejoice, God is with us

Being honest, like Mary, when we don't understand
Let us rejoice, God is with us

Responding, like Mary, to God's promise of freedom
Let us rejoice, God is with us

Questioning, like Mary, as we engage with the world
Let us rejoice, God is with us

Pledging, like Mary, to lift up the humble
Let us rejoice, God is with us

Hymn

Invitation to Confession

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good.
Romans 12:9

Let us confess our sins and failings to God our merciful Father.

We have done what was wrong in your sight
And chosen what has displeased you
Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy**

As a mother comforts her child so shall you comfort us
Christ, have mercy **Christ, have mercy**

Let us return to you, for you know our every deed and thought
Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy**

The congregation could place their apple pictures in a basket or box and receive a rose before hearing the prayer of forgiveness. Quiet music could be played

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins,
Heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
And raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Gloria

The Gloria may be sung if the service is not in Lent. The Gloria is not sung in Lent

Collect

We beseech thee, O Lord,
Pour thy grace into our hearts,
That, as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ
By the message of an angel,
So by his cross and passion
We may be brought unto the glory of his resurrection;
Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Liturgy of the Word

Reading The Magnificat, adapted from Luke 1:46 – 54

Reader 1

And Mary said, "My soul glorifies God,
My spirit rejoices in my Saviour,
For he has remembered my humility.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
For God has done great things for me –
Holy is his name.

Reader 2

God remembers everyone who turns to him from generation to generation

Reader 3

God has performed mighty deeds and has cast out the proud

Reader 2

God has lifted up the humble and has brought down rulers from their thrones

Reader 3

God has filled the hungry with good things and has sent the rich away empty

My soul glorifies God, My spirit rejoices in my Saviour

Hymn

Gospel Reading Luke 1:26-38

Sermon, Talk or Reflection

A meditation on Luke 1:26-38

“You’ve got it wrong,” I told him.

“You can’t mean me, no way!

Someone else perhaps, more worthy, more important,
but not me!”

Honestly, what did I have to commend me?

No connections or special qualities,
nothing –

just an ordinary girl from Nazareth,
so what could God see in me?

But it was academic anyway, for I wasn’t even married yet,
and there was no way I’d sleep with Joseph until I was.

So I came straight out with it,

“Sorry, but you’re wrong!”

Only he wouldn’t take no for an answer.

Just stood there smiling, unruffled;
and before I knew it he was off again –
the message even more fantastic than before.

God’s power overshadowing me,
a child born of the Holy Spirit,
the Son of God!

It was way over the top,
and I should have turned him out there and then,
but I was flummoxed,
too amazed to reply.

Even when I found my tongue it wasn’t much use to me –
my mind so befuddled with questions
that I ended up saying, of all things,
“Here I am, the servant of the Lord,
let it be with me according to your word.”

Oh, it sounded good, granted –
the epitome of humility –
but if you only knew what I was thinking,
you’d have a different picture then.

So what got into me, you ask?

How could I be so meek and accepting?

Well, what choice did I have, let’s be honest,
for as the angel said, “With God, nothing will be impossible.”

How could I argue with that?

There was no way out, was there?
But it's one thing to accept that in principle,
another when it turns your life upside down.
Do I believe it?
Well, I didn't at the time, but I do now,
for I've just discovered I'm pregnant,
and I say this perfectly reverently, God knows how!
It's astonishing and terrifying,
exciting yet mystifying,
my mind in turmoil, not quite sure what to think any more.
But one thing is plain now,
beyond all question –
with God, quite clearly, *nothing* is impossible!
Source unknown

Hymn

Prayers

You will need five small vases each containing a single rose or other simple garden flower. Each vase could be brought forward to the front if possible by someone born in a different decade before each prayer, starting with the oldest person

Loving God,
We give thanks for the great love you have for each of us. We pray that you will help each of us pass that love on to the next generation.
Lord hear our prayer
Please hear us

Loving God,
We give thanks for all mothers and fathers and for everything they do, or once did for us, and for all that they mean to us today.
Lord hear our prayer
Please hear us

Loving God,
We thank you for family life.
We pray for those who are waiting for a new baby, and beginning family life.
We pray for those who are trying to make home and family in difficult circumstances, especially in places of war and struggle.
Lord, hear our prayer **Please hear us**

Loving God,
We thank you for the family of the church.
We pray for those who welcome others, who encourage and bless. Inspire us in our worship, and give us a new vision to show your love to those around us.
Lord, hear our prayer **Please hear us**

Loving God,
Thank you for everybody who looks after people.
Help us to know that you are always with each one of us.

Lord, hear our prayer **Please hear us**

Remembering the work of our organisation, unified in lifting the humble high across the world, we say together our Mothers' Union prayer

Loving Lord

We thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union

As we seek to share your love

Through the encouragement, strengthening

And support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit,

May we be united in prayer and worship,

And in love and service reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus' name. Amen

If the service is a service of the word, it may be appropriate to end the prayers with the Lord's Prayer, before sharing the peace together.

If the service is a Eucharist, continue with the peace followed by the offertory and the Eucharistic prayer

Sharing the Peace

United in prayer, we join together to commit ourselves to lifting the humble high, as Mary did.

The sign of peace is a model for the way we should seek to live. We are offering affirmation, lifting each other up with love. As we exchange a sign of peace, let us dedicate ourselves to lifting the humble high in the world at large in our daily lives.

God is our peace.

May we embrace each other in God's peace,

Holding divine love within our clasped hands.

The peace of the Lord be with you now and always. **And also with you!**

We exchange a sign of peace.

The Dismissal

Hymn

Closing prayer

May the love of the Holy Family surround us.

May the joy that was Mary's refresh us.

May the faithfulness that was Joseph's encourage us.

May the peace of the Christ Child fill our lives. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ. Amen!