

### **The Future of the World in the Hands of Girl**

"She struck the angel Gabriel as hardly old enough to have a child at all, let alone this child, but he'd been entrusted with a message to give her, and he gave it. He told her what the child was to be named, and who he was to be, and something about the mystery that was to come upon her. "You mustn't be afraid, Mary," he said. And as he said it, he only hoped she wouldn't notice that beneath the great, golden wings he himself was trembling with fear to think that the whole future of creation hung now on the answer of a girl." (by Frederick Buechner)

### **"Do not be afraid!"**

It's an obvious understatement to say we live in a day of great fear. The language of "terror" has become the motivating mantra of our day. I did a Google search for the word "fear," and I came up with a fascinating site called "The Phobia List"—pages of phobias, A to Z. Everything from Alliumphobia—the fear of garlic and Lachanophobia—the fear of vegetables to Zemmiphobia—the fear of the great mole rat. It even lists Ecclesiophobia—the fear of church and, get this, Homilophobia—the fear of sermons! You can even get a poster of the "Phobia List" which will cover your entire wall. We all have our own phobia lists, and the list can be as fresh as the morning papers:

Daily bad news from the auto industry, uncertainty about the present and future course of Covid 19 and its economic repercussions, about the state of the economy or personal security.

A questionable course in Iraq, Afghanistan ... wherever, with no clear sense of how long all this will go on, when or how it will end.

Fear of bird flu or bad weather or a bitter diagnosis from the family doctor. Add to that, fear-mongering TV preachers and politicians who use talk of terror for political gain until the fear of terror becomes its own terror.

And add to that, panic-driven newscasters who can't even give the weather without fear-filled, bated breath. It all leads to what Jane Spencer in the *Wall Street Journal* refers to as the "fear system" of our day. Into that maze of fear, we have the audacity to read the word of the angel to Mary: "Do not be afraid!" Fr. Tony (<http://frtonyshomilies.com/>)

### **Consider the Impossible**

This is a story of impossibilities. Consider the impossibilities Mary faced in this story: She is a virgin and pregnant—she is having a child while she is a virgin. Impossible! No way! Won't happen!

Joseph has to follow through on the marriage after he discovers Mary is pregnant. Impossible!

Mary must avoid being stoned to death when the neighbors hear the news. Impossible!

Consider the **impossibility Elizabeth faced**. She was well past the childbearing age, and yet God says she is going to conceive and bear a child. This impossible news left old Zechariah speechless. Impossible! No way! Won't happen! This is a story of biblical impossibilities. But, what are the impossibilities in our world? What would you label "impossible" in your life?

- Peace in our world. Impossible! No way! Won't happen!
- Christian values returning to our nation, morality becoming the norm? Impossible!
- Our church reaching our surrounding community and making our world different? Impossible!
- Restoring relationships, healing past hurts in our lives. A relative or friend entering a relationship with Christ.
- Breaking an addiction and overcoming past hurts and disappointments? Impossible!

We find ourselves with the same troubled mind as Mary, wondering over the impossible (v. 29). We even ask the same question Mary asked, "How will this be?" (v. 34). To us it seems impossible! No way! Won't happen! The real question for people today is "How can the impossible become possible?" (by Dwight Gunter from *The Possible Impossible*)

### **"He's out moose-hunting."**

There was a story years ago in the Canadian version of the *Reader's Digest* of a large moose that wandered into a residential area in Calgary, Canada. The moose ended up on the lawn of a lady named Lorna Cade. A Fish and Wildlife officer was dispatched to try to coax the magnificent animal back into the wild. After two hours of absolutely no progress, the officer finally shot the moose with a tranquilizer dart. The moose bolted down a lane and eventually collapsed on another nearby lawn. The reporters who had been following this event interviewed the lady at the house where the moose collapsed. They asked her what she thought about the moose which had passed out on her lawn. "I'm surprised," she answered, "but not as surprised as my husband will be. He's out moose-hunting." -

Her husband had gone out looking for moose and a large moose had come to him. That is the message of Christmas.

While humanity spends its time seeking after God, God comes to us in the Baby of Bethlehem. Fr. Tony (<http://frtonyshomilies.com/>)