

TUESDAY IS 25 MARCH, THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION, NINE MONTHS TILL CHRISTMAS!

Wonder with the **WORD** Dermot Connolly

Angelus

The Annunciation of the Lord is celebrated on 25th March each year with gospel words. (See Luke 1:26-38) The Angelus is a prayer that tells the same story – three times daily – with gospel words and church bells! The **image** is how, in 1898, the African/American artist Henry Ossawa Tanner imagined the Annunciation scene.



The Annunciation, 1898, by Henry Ossawa Tanner (American (active France), 1859–1937), Oil on canvas. Dimensions: 57 × 71 ¼ inches (144.8 × 181 cm) Framed: 6 feet 1¾ inches × 7 feet 3¼ inches (187.3 × 221.6 cm) (Photo: Philadelphia Museum of Art)

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary; and she conceived of the Holy Spirit. (See Luke 1:26-38)

Hail Mary....

Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word. (See Luke 1:37-38)

Hail Mary....

The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us. (See John 1:1-18)

Hail Mary....

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Whenever we pray the Angelus we celebrate the **Incarnation** of Christ Jesus, Son of God. Word made flesh, dwelling among us. Or as Mary his mother might have said, "dwelling within me." The Son of God is as intimate to us as that!

The Word became flesh, and lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of an only-begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 RNJB)

But the Angelus also celebrates **Creation**: the world, the universe around us, seen and unseen: through the Word all things came into being. (See John 1:1-5)

He is the image of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things

*in heaven and on earth:
everything visible and everything invisible....
(Colossians 1:15-18)*

And we celebrate **Resurrection**, the other great creation that we hope for:

*He is the beginning,
the first-born from the dead,
so that he should be supreme in every way;
because God wanted all fullness to be found in him
and through him to reconcile all things to him,
everything in heaven and everything on earth,
by making peace through the blood of his cross.
(Colossians 1:18-20)*

The Angelus' concluding prayer draws it together:

Let us pray: **Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, your Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection, through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen.** ■

Fr Dermot Connolly spent many years ministering in Nigeria and now works in the Region of Ireland.