

## A New Creation

St. Paul writes, "...if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation, the old has passed away ... the new has come..." (2 Corinthians 5:17) Paul experienced this new birth, this new creation through his own conversion experience and knowing the new life of the Holy Spirit working in him. He writes that "the whole creation has been groaning in travail ..." and "waiting", "longing" for hope, new birth, the Spirit of the living God. (Romans 8:18-26)

Think of Mary, probably a teenager, anticipating new life as Joseph's wife. All of a sudden, she, too, experiences this new life, this new creation. God breaks into Mary's life; God breaks into Paul's life; God breaks into each of our lives with new life, with the Spirit. This activity of God is the same creating, the same loving, the same presence that we read about at the start of Genesis with the story of God creating the world. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving... God said "Let there be light; and there was light..."

St. John begins his own Gospel looking back to this creation. Jesus is the light. Jesus is the word. Jesus is God. Jesus' birth creates a new world. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... all things were made through him ... in him was life, and the life was the light of the world..."

When Gabriel came to Mary she was at first "perplexed," troubled, disturbed by this revelation, this announcement of a new creation. The angel told her "Do not be afraid ..." and she found strength to accept, to serve, to go through new life.

For her response, Mary is known as the Godbearer; she is considered Holy; full of grace. She is the first to believe. The first to say "yes." The first "new creation" in Christ; first among all the Saints and venerated through all time.

We can't explain a pregnancy by the Holy Spirit. We understand God's creating power and love – at the start of all time, all life and in the lives of individuals like Mary, John, Paul, you and me.

We pray in the last collect for Advent that God would not just find a room for Jesus in our lives. We pray that our lives would be like "mansions" prepared for Christ's visit. We pray that we would know the reality of being newly created and carry the life of Jesus in our lives, as Mary did in hers.

God comes: Will we be ready? God creates: will we allow ourselves to be made over, recreated in God's image? God loves: will we share this love, present it to others?

Our King and Savior now draws near.

Come, let us adore him.