

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Solemnity
December 8

Reading 1

Citation: Genesis, Chap. 3, Verses 9-15, 20
Genesis 3: 9-15, 20

The story of the Temptation. God is, at first, curious about Adam's whereabouts. He is a bit disturbed by Adam's answer. On being confronted and questioned, Adam finds Eve an available scapegoat. God is more disturbed as He questions Eve. Finally, he explodes at the snake and insists His vengeance will commence, but with a promise of a righting of the circumstances at some future date, through the woman. Make distinctions between the three characters if at all possible. Put yourself in each character's place – how you'd feel. Everything changes at the end.

A reading from the Book of Genesis

After the man,
Adam,
had eaten of the tree,
the LORD God called to the man and asked him, (short pause)
"Where are you?" (inquiring, concern, not angry) (short pause)

He answered, (very short pause)
"I heard you in the garden; (assuring God that he heard him)
but I was afraid, (now the excuses start!)
because I was naked, (almost a parenthetical expression) (very short pause)
so I hid myself." (separate "so" from "I hid...") (short pause)

Then he asked, (short pause)
"Who told you that you were naked? (questioning, hint of anger) (short pause)
You have eaten, then, (God's upset!)
from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat!" (but He's not fully angry) (short pause)

The man replied, (short pause)
"The woman whom you put here with me (excuse" in your voice)
she gave me fruit from the tree,
and so I ate it." ("he's not to blame" tone) (short pause)

The LORD God then asked the woman, (very short pause)
"Why did you do such a thing?" (can't believe it!) (short pause)

The woman answered,
"The serpent tricked me into it, (her excuses start!)
so I ate it." ("not my fault" tone) (short pause)

Then
the LORD God said to the serpent: (short pause)
"Because you have done this, (anger is mounting)

Proclamation Format

you shall be banned from all the animals
and from all the wild creatures;
on your belly shall you crawl,
and dirt shall you eat
all the days of your life.

(fully angry through these next lines)

(very short pause)

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;

(firm voice, commanding) (very short pause)

(very short pause)

he will strike at your head,
while you strike at his heel."

(triumphant)

(disdain) (short pause)

The man called his wife Eve,
because she became the mother of all the living.

(softer tone; matter-of-fact)

(convinced)

The word of the Lord.

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Reading 2

Citation: Ephesians, Chap. 1, Verses 3-6, 11-12
Ephesians 1: 3-6, 11-12

Paul is reminding his converts of what has happened in their lives as a result of their decision to become followers of Jesus. He is convinced that he and they are the newly “chosen” ones – God giving of Himself to them through Christ. We are not “worthy” of this gift but we are, nonetheless, the receivers of this great gift of life in God for the single purpose of giving glory to God. It is an awesome gift, one that must be seen in that kind of light. Let your listeners hear your awe of the magnificence of God in your life.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

Brothers and sisters:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ
with every spiritual blessing in the heavens,

(short pause)

as he chose us in him,
before the foundation of the world,
to be holy
and without blemish
before him.

(parenthetical expression?)

(short pause)

In love
he destined us for adoption to himself
through Jesus Christ,
in accord with the favor of his will,
for the praise of the glory of his grace
that he granted us in the beloved.

(parenthetical expression)
(reverent awe) (very short pause)
(short pause)

In him
we were also chosen,
destined

(very short pause)

in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things
according to the intention of his will,

(parenthetical expression)
(very short pause) (almost parenthetical)

so that we might exist for the praise of his glory,
we
who first hoped in Christ.

(affirmation)

The word of the Lord.

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GOSPEL

Citation: Luke, Chap. 1, Verses 26-38
Luke 1: 26-38

How would you react if you suddenly were given news of a personal gift from someone very famous that no one in your family or neighborhood knew or could possibly understand? Keep these feelings in mind as you prepare to relate Mary's doubt, wonder, amazement, and final acceptance in this story. Keep in mind, too, the trust in the donor you would have to have to ensure that everything was going to work out OK. There is a second character, too – the messenger. You know what you are delivering is almost beyond belief. How would you go about gaining the trust of the person to whom you have to give the message?

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

The angel Gabriel was sent from God
to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,
to a virgin
betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David,
and the virgin's name was Mary.

(simple storytelling)

And coming to her,
he said,
"Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you."

(announcement? greeting?)

But she was greatly troubled at what was said
and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

(WOW!)

Then the angel said to her,
"Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favor with God.
Behold,
you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,
and you shall name him Jesus.

(very short pause)

(great news! if a bit unusual)
(very short pause)

He will be great
and will be called
Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,
and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,
and of his kingdom there will be no end."

(very short pause)
(short pause)

But Mary said to the angel,
"How can this be,
since I have no relations with a man?"

(very doubting)

And the angel said to her in reply,

Proclamation Format

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore the child to be born will be called holy,
the Son of God.

(insistent)
(very short pause)

(very short pause)

And behold,
Elizabeth, your relative,
has also conceived a son in her old age,
and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;
for nothing will be impossible for God."

(almost amazement!)
(voice goes up then down)

Mary said,
"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
May it be done to me according to your word."

(acceptance)
(humility) (short pause)

Then the angel departed from her.

(matter-of-factly)

The Gospel of the Lord.