



Catechetical Series:

What Catholics Believe & Why

THE CONCEPTION AND BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

Behold The Truth

Discovering the What & Why of the Catholic Faith
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The Annunciation to Zechariah

- ❖ Saint Luke starts his Gospel with the Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel to the priest Zechariah.
- ❖ The Angel tells him his wife, Elizabeth, who is elderly, will give birth to a son (John the Baptist).
- ❖ Zechariah doubts the Angel's word and is punished by being struck dumb till the time of his son's birth.

Why do you think Zechariah was punished?



The Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary

- ❖ Luke follows the story of Gabriel's Annunciation to Zechariah with the Angel's Annunciation to Mary.
- ❖ Appearing to her, Gabriel says: "*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!*" Luke 1:28
- ❖ The word "Hail" is ordinarily used to greet a person of great importance, such as a king or queen.



*Why do you think Luke contrasts
Mary's Annunciation to
Zechariah's Annunciation?*

The Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary

- ❖ The Greek word *kecharitomene*, or “full of grace,” means “she who has been completely and permanently blessed.”
- ❖ Gabriel tells Mary she has been chosen by God to bear His Son Jesus (whose name means “God saves”). Luke 1:31
- ❖ Mary believes the Angel, and replies, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word.” Luke 1:38

The Ark of the New Covenant



- ❖ In the Old Covenant, God commanded the Israelites to construct an Ark to carry the tablets of the Ten Commandments, His word in stone.
- ❖ The Ark had to be made of incorruptible wood and lined inside and out with pure gold because it carried holy objects touched by the hand of God.

The Ark of the New Covenant

- ❖ Mary is called the “Ark of the New Covenant.”
- ❖ She also had to be made pure and incorruptible (the Immaculate Conception) for she would carry Jesus, the Word of God in flesh.



Would it have been fitting for Jesus, the Son of God, to have been conceived and born of a sinner?

Historical Facts Around Christ's Birth

- ❖ Luke gives us historical facts surrounding the birth of Jesus. Cf. Luke 2:1-2
- ❖ He speaks of a decree that went out from Caesar Augustus concerning a worldwide census.
- ❖ And he mentions Quirinius, who was governor of Syria.



Why do you think Luke included these historical facts?



Our Savior Is Born

- ❖ “And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7
- ❖ The term “first-born son” does not mean Mary had other children
- ❖ “First-born” is simply a Jewish ceremonial title given to the first child, even to children who do not have siblings.



Our Savior Is Born

- ❖ Jesus was born in *Bethlehem*, which means “House of Bread.”
- ❖ And He was laid in a manger, a feeding trough for animals.
- ❖ This is fitting symbolism for One who would call Himself “the Bread of Life.” John 6:35

There was no place for the Holy Family at the inn. How can we make room for them in our heart?



An Angel Tells the Shepherds the Good News

- ❖ “And in that region there were shepherds out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and they were filled with fear.” Luke 2:8
- ❖ The event of the angel appearing to the shepherds is a *theophany*, a visible manifestation of the glory of God.



An Angel Tells the Shepherds the Good News

- ❖ “Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” Luke 2:11
- ❖ “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!’” Luke 2:14



An Angel Tells the Shepherds the Good News

- ❖ “When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.’”
Luke 2:15
- ❖ When the shepherds first saw the angels they were fearful. Then their fear was transformed into wonder.

What caused the shepherds' fear to be transformed into wonder?



The Shepherds See the Christ Child

- ❖ “And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.” Luke 2:16
- ❖ “And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child.” Luke 2:17
- ❖ “And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.” Luke 2:18



The Shepherds See the Christ Child

- ❖ “But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.” Luke 2:19
- ❖ The initial fear of the shepherds was transformed into wonder, and ultimately into joy at the sight of the Christ Child.

What caused the shepherds' fear to be transformed into joy?





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