

Feast of the Annunciation
March 25
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I have the opportunity to fly several times a year as I travel to conferences and other events. Call me a nerd (dork, dweeb, Poindexter, or other such names from my high school days), but I am one of the few people on the plane that pays attention when the Flight Attendant goes through the whole safety routine. I have heard it so many times, I could probably do it for them. I know that there are six exits, I know the lights on the floor will illuminate. I know that my seat cushion can be used as a flotation device (which is always comforting on my flights from Milwaukee to Kansas City) and I know that I should always, always, put my oxygen mask on first. Finally, I am the first one to have my seat back in the full and upright position. Good job, Poindexter. Even though I know it all, I always listen to the announcements.

But many people don't. So many are caught up in what they are doing, submersed in their own little worlds that they miss important things being announced to them. It's a part of the human condition, I suspect. We must learn to stop, listen, and process that which is being presented to us. So it is with us today and so it was with Mary all those years ago. As I reflect on the Feast of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38), I am always struck by the awesome nature of this event. The Angel of the Lord appears to her and delivers an incredible message. Faithful Mary receives the message and responds in such a precious and beautiful way, "Behold the Handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word." Luke 1:38

But wait - notice Mary's initial response to this awesome message. She has just been told that the child she will bear will be the Son of the Highest and reign on the throne of David. Her son will reign over the house of Jacob, and his kingdom will never end. She is talking to an Angel. Mary's response to this awesome message is , "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Luke 1:34. She skates over the incredible proclamation of what this child will be, and gets hung up on the logistics of the situation. In some ways, Mary misses the awesomeness of the announcement. Not that her question isn't a good one, it makes a lot of sense. And I don't mean to take anything away from Mary, we know that she understands and embraces the miracle that is about to happen to and through her. But just for a split second, Mary forgets the majesty of the all powerful God and her question reflects the limitations of our human understanding. This is not a condemnation of Mary - if anything it should be a source of comfort and inspiration for all of us. She is human, normal. But even with a little hiccup in the event, Mary listens to the angel and the announcement, and responds in faith and in great courage.

Too many people are missing God's announcements in their lives. It's as if he stands before us, telling us important life-saving things and yet few are paying attention. We've heard it all before, or we're caught up in our own little worlds and not paying attention. And yet God stands before us, pointing out the exits, the lights for our path, and trying to breath into us his life saving breath that we must put on ourselves first, and then offer to others. God has something to announce to each one of us. Perhaps

we need to pay a little more attention to Jesus and his messages in our lives. Perhaps we need to take more time to stop, listen, reflect, pray. Maybe we've heard it all before on the airplane, but with God there are new blessings for us every day if we'll just listen to the announcements. Blessed Annunciation.