

**Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord**  
**Homily of the Most Reverend John O. Barres**  
**St. Agnes Cathedral**  
**March 25, 2020**

**On this Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, we remember and rejoice in the humble and bold “yes” of a young woman named Mary,**

**Her simple and silent “yes” in the presence of the Angel Gabriel completely transformed the course of Salvation History and World History.**

**On this Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, I want to thank each and every one of you for the “yes” you have said to the Lord in the various seasons and stages of your life.**

**Thank you for the “yes” you said the day of your Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation. Thank you for the “yes” you said every time you experienced the Divine Mercy in the Sacrament of Penance.**

**Thank you for the “yes” of our many young people who are heroic and courageous in the way they live their Catholic faith.**

**Thank you for the “yes” you said the day you celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage or the day you were ordained to the Priesthood or professed the vows of Religious Life.**

**Thank you also for the day-to-day and moment-to-moment “yes” you have said in the daily rhythm of your life ever since.**

**Thank you for the “yes” you said every time you embraced the mystery of the Cross in your life.**

**Thank you for saying “yes” to a radical commitment to holiness.**

When Our Lady said “yes” to the will of God in the mystery of the Annunciation, she did not see at that moment that that “yes” also enfolded a future “yes” to her being physically and mystically present at Calvary as her son Jesus died on the Cross.

None of us could foresee that our “yes” to the Lord would involve ourselves standing at the foot of the Cross with people from all over the world as we experience our fears and anxieties concerning the global impact of the COVID-19 virus, our healthcare, our finances, our employment and the many other dimensions of the crisis we face *together*.

One year ago exactly on this very same Solemnity at the Shrine of the Holy House in Loreto, Italy, Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Exhortation entitled *Christ is Alive* addressed to young people and the entire People of God.

In *Christ is Alive*, the Holy Father shows how the young woman Mary, Mother of God, can inspire young people and all people today.

He writes: “We are always struck by the strength of the young Mary’s ‘yes,’ the strength in those words, ‘be it done,’ that she spoke to the angel. This was no merely passive or resigned acceptance, or a faint ‘yes,’ as if to say, ‘Well, let’s give it a try and see what happens.’ Mary did not know the words, ‘Let’s see what happens.’ She was determined; she knew what was at stake and she said ‘yes’ without thinking twice. Here was the ‘yes’ of someone prepared to be committed, someone willing to take a risk, ready to stake everything she had, with no more security than the certainty of knowing that she was the bearer of a promise. So I ask each one of you: do you see yourselves as the bearers of a promise? What promise is present in my heart that I can take up? Mary’s mission would undoubtedly be difficult, but the challenges that lay ahead were no reason to say ‘no.’ Things would get complicated, of course, but not in the same way as happens when cowardice paralyzes us because things are not clear or sure in advance. Mary did not take out an insurance policy! She took the risk, and for this reason she is strong, she is an ‘influencer,’ the ‘influencer’ of God. Her ‘yes’ and her desire to serve were stronger than any doubts or difficulties.” (44)

**On this Solemnity of the Annunciation, let's follow the Woman of the Word of God and the Woman of the Eucharist in her bold and decisive "yes" to the will of God and the power of the Cross of Jesus Christ. Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us!**