

+ J. M. J.

News travels quickly. Sometimes it spreads faster than we like. Today in our connected world with all the texting, Twitter, Facebook, etc. the dissemination of news, good or bad, can be almost instantaneous.

The Greek word for Gospel, *euaggelion*, means good news and by the time it got translated into English it literally came out good spell to capture the idea of power of the word of God, a word which is living and effective, sharper than any two-edge sword (Heb. 4:12). Why do we need good news? Because we are looking for an answer for why there is evil in the world. We want to know its cause. My friends, there is no cause for evil. Every good thing is caused by God. Evil is irrational, disordered, and destroys because it is the absence of God, and that is why we can't make sense of it. God has a remedy.

Beginning with the fall of Adam and Eve first Gospel is proclaimed and then all the patriarchs and prophets prepare the way for our redeemer, who Micah tells us will be born in Bethlehem. It is Jesus who fixes what was broken.

After thousands of years of God's people praying, preparing, and waiting an angel appears to a simple girl, Mary and announces that a savior is coming into the world and she is to be a mother. What does Mary do after the announcement of the good news? She goes in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth. She brings Jesus and the Holy Spirit to Elizabeth and John the Baptist which causes John to leap for joy in Elizabeth's womb and Elizabeth to exclaim "**Blessed are you among women.**" Certainly Mary is graced because she received the singular grace to be the Mother of God, but our blessed Lord elsewhere tell us that Mary is blessed because **those who hear the word of God and observe it** are blessed (cf. Luke 11:28). Mary is full of grace precisely because she accepted in humility all the gifts that God offered to her and her soul was permeated with the Holy Spirit, and with that grace she is able to go out into the world and do whatever God asks. Recall one of her few prayers is at the wedding in Cana. "**Do whatever he tells you**" (John 2:5).

Our world desperately needs a savior... At Christmas we will celebrate the Son of God coming into the world. We though, don't just simply recall an event. Advent calls us to prepare for that second coming by announcing to all what Jesus did for us and where we are heading. We are to spread the good news as today we heard Mary do. For most people here that doesn't mean standing in front of hundreds of people and evangelizing. No, we go back to our relatives or our friends and are **"ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks... for a reason for [our] hope"** (1 Pet. 4:15). This isn't some passive thing where we might be possibly willing to talk about Jesus if an opportunity happened to present itself. We have to be in tune with the Holy Spirit and looking to actively spread the Gospel. Only Jesus gets us to heaven. Only Jesus is the remedy for the evil in the world. How can we deny him to those we love or even anyone on the planet?

That brings us to our conversations. What do we talk about? Many of them are about trifling things, things that won't matter once earth passes away (cf. Matt. 24:35). In the scheme of eternity what does it matter what we wear, how cold is it, or who will win the Super Bowl? The most important conversations are where we can share the things that matter most to us. The thing that matters most to everyone here is what Jesus is doing in your heart. For some reason we are scared to share such things like our prayer life or how scripture has moved us. Consider this. How many of us remember praying say the rosary or reading scripture as a family when we were young? Compare that with how many of the other insignificant conversations we remember from our youth. We should all have stories of how God has touched our lives. This is the good news. These need to be shared, and we should not be afraid of what people could possibly think because we can never be wrong in saying how God has affected me. In fact most people will be edified by our faith, which is the path to conversion or deeper conversion...