

DAY 2

I - INCARNATION

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As we follow up on the Father's injunction to *listen to him*, we want to listen to more than just his words, for what the Lord does is an equally important component of his message and indeed it is a *deed-revelation* of who Jesus is. So, we will consider from its very beginning what Jesus **does**.

The first thing *my beloved Son* does is becoming like one of us, becoming fully human. The Spiritual Exercises stage a quasi-deliberation scene within the Trinity. They see a world gone astray and in need of "repair" [see Rom. 1: 28-32] and they decide that the second Person of the Trinity become human and show us how a human life can be lived in accord with God's desire. Incarnation follows, certainly a giant step.

The first line of Christ's message, before the incarnate God can talk, is what the Son does. *Listening to him* starts with pondering that very first step of God becoming like one of us *in all things except sin* [Heb. 4: 15].

So, what did Jesus **do** in becoming conceived? For us being conceived is ultimately being put in existence without being consulted, for how could we be consulted, when we did not even exist? For the incarnate God being conceived was a deliberate choice. God did not need being conceived in order to exist, even less to experience happiness, and in fact it was precisely through becoming human that God became capable of suffering. At a moment when God incarnate cannot yet speak, we must listen to this **key deed** of God in Jesus of Nazareth and remain attentive to the Father's injunction: *listen to him*.

At the incarnation Jesus brought together in himself divinity and humanity and since that moment there is a point of convergence, where the human and the divine touch, and that point of convergence is Jesus of Nazareth: that embryo, that eventually grown-up man. In the words of Teilhard de Chardin, at that point of convergence the human DNA intercepts the divine DNA. Since then we cannot touch divinity without somehow in Jesus touching also humanity and we cannot touch humanity without somehow in Jesus touching also divinity, which explains Jesus' words: *whatever you did (or failed to do) for one of these little ones, you did (or failed to do) for me* [Mt. 25: 31-46]. At a moment when God incarnate cannot yet utter words, we must *listen* to this **deed** of Jesus in becoming an isthmus between God's divine "continent" and our human "continent".

In becoming incarnate at that place over 2,000 years ago and in a rural culture, Jesus could not avoid accepting limits to his witness. He did not witness in this our time, in this our culture, in this our technological age. He also limited the message of his **deeds** to a message given by a male human, not a female human, given by a rather young man, not by a middle-age or elderly human being. Embracing these unavoidable limitations of being truly human is a **deed** of the God incarnate and we need to listen to this deed –*listen to him*– and to own its implications for us. Specifically for women it implicates them in the mission of witnessing to Christ's message in a way he could not do, as female human beings with the feminine qualities he did not have. Because of this deed of embracing limitations, it falls upon us, as we in baptism embrace sharing

in the mission of Christ, to give witness both as men and as women, as human beings beyond the age of about 33 years, at this particular point of human history and in this culture.

REFERENCE SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

INCARNATION

Lk. 1: 26-38

In the sixth month 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. And coming to her, he said *Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.* But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 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. 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.* But Mary said to the angel: *How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?* And the angel said to her in reply: *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. 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.* Mary said: *Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.* Then the angel departed from her.

Other pertinent texts

<i>Is. 7: 13-14</i>	A maiden will give birth to "God-with-us".
<i>Jn. 1: 1-14</i>	Prologue on the incarnation.
<i>Rom. 1: 28-32</i>	View of sinful world in need of redemption.
<i>2Cor. 8: 9</i>	Being rich, He became poor for us.
<i>Gal. 4: 3-4</i>	...born of a woman... so we could receive adoption as children of God.
<i>Heb. 4: 15</i>	...one like us in all things, except sin.