



Daily Reflections

TRUST AND SAY YES!

By Alicia Rodriguez

Excerpt from Today's Gospel

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, full of grace! 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."... 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.

LUKE 1:26-30, 38

When the angel Gabriel informs Mary about God's plan for her, Mary is troubled and confused, as probably any human would be in that position. Yet even though she is uncertain about how everything will pan out, she trusts in the words that the angel has delivered to her and declares herself the handmaid

of the Lord.

This gospel has a special place in my heart because it was the theme for the 2019 World Youth Day that I attended in Panama. Reflecting on that pilgrimage, I realize now that I had to put complete trust in the Lord even before going on the trip.

I remember feeling a call to go, but I was afraid to commit to such a big thing -- and I was also afraid because it was going to be my first time traveling without family or friends. I went with a group of people from Orange County and didn't know anyone in the group. I was timid and shy and felt like I was imposing on their trip because most of them knew each other.

Regardless of how I felt, though, I had already told myself that I was going to go to discover why I was being called to Panama. It was there that I met my best friends -- a pair of sisters around my age who were trying to figure out why they were there as well. We discussed our love for literature, history, and exploring the awe-inspiring world that God created ... which led us to spend a morning in the rain forest. It was also on that pilgrimage that I discovered my love for photography and journaling. I didn't know it then, but saying yes and trusting God's plan for me to go to Panama brought me peace and provided me with a new set of skills to better understand myself and my spirituality, and allowed me to observe the world around me while being present in the moment.

Since then, my friends moved out of their parents' house and now live closer to me, and we visit each other regularly. We help each other out in our spiritual journeys and laugh about how we "accidentally" ended up going to Panama -- because we somehow got there when every part of us initially didn't want to go. We lived firsthand our trust in God, saying yes to the plan that was made for us, and that has made it easier for me to say yes more often to what God is calling me to do: I have seen the bounty of graces I receive every time I do so.



Walking with Other Pilgrims - Panama City, Panama

Photo by Alicia M. Rodriguez

For Pondering

- Reflect on your past lived experiences. Where did you have to trust God's plan even though the thought of it troubled you? What graces did you receive because you trusted God?
- Do you find trusting God easy or difficult? What are some ways you can work on trusting God's plan better than your own?

For Prayer

*O God,
your faith in me to carry out your will is mighty,
and mightier still is your love for me.
Hold me by the hand and guide me through the joys and difficulties of this life.
Allow me to be open to what you have in store for me
and grant me the grace to reject the things that will lead me astray
from your plan.
I ask this through your precious name.
Amen.*

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