The French painter Henri Matisse once said, "Creativity takes courage." Although he was reflecting on the creative process of an artist, it is no less true in all human activity—whether in relationships, work, or (and perhaps more significantly) mere expression of oneself. The inverse of this saying—courage takes creativity—is also true, though it is less observed in life. Anyone who decides to take a challenge upon himself/herself, especially when the challenge presents little to no information ("Paint me a picture"); "Outdo yourself"), will have to figure out a way how to express and at the same time validate his/her decision of rising to the challenge.

The Gospel today presents us with the angel's annunciation to the young girl Mary. As if pregnancy and birth weren't dangerous enough, Mary is asked to allow God to dwell in her by becoming her Son, a human child without an explainable human father. Although the divine message here conveys that "with God nothing is impossible," Mary must still have been overwhelmed by the great responsibility and risk that her "Amen" would bring upon her. But then again, YHWH yireh—God will provide.

Trust in God's providence, however, is not the same as a begging reliance. By the end of that fateful day, Mary was already setting out to the town of her co-pregnant kinswoman to see for herself the sign that the angel has said: not that Mary did not believe, but that this was another divine message, a small but sure comfort to the challenge to her person. From the moment she agreed to God's plan of salvation, Mary chose to follow the rules regarding new mothers as dictated by the Law of her religion and the customs of her society. With the loving help of Joseph, her faithful spouse, the virgin became a mother nine months later. Mary raised her only child with God's and her husband's guidance, and the young Jesus became a faithful and responsible son and Jew. While it cannot be denied that Jesus gradually used his own will during his life as an obedient and discerning boy, we can naturally surmise that Mary's parenting was a true mark of her creativity. Anyone who says that a woman is not creative has surely forgotten his/her own mother.

Mary's relationship with the divine Word places her as an example for us not only as a mother par excellence but as a model believer. We usually take up our faith as either a social duty or as a vending machine or as an agony aunt's column. If God truly matters to us, what he wills must be an overriding concern in our decisions, big or small. It is not only us who get to do the talking and the providing—we also have to do our share of praying, saying yes, and producing good works as fruit of our faith. This is the creative part of faith—not just being artsy-fartsy in our expression of our relationship with the divine, but electing (in Latin create, from which we get the English verb 'create'), choosing to do what is right, no matter how starkly black-and-white our decision is.

Christianity owes a lot to Mary: from Mary we get the foremost example of a disciple, which is the art of conforming oneself to Christ Jesus. Our faith is not just a science (logia), filled with ideas to memorize and accept; it is also an art (technē), a personal communication to the divine, molded by who we are and what we assent to or not. As we contemplate God's providence today, let us resolve to see him eye to eye in his desire that we may be one with him, and learn to let our Lord permeate our thoughts, words, and deeds. Amen.

Ivan Olitoquit
Entrance Antiphon
[Cf. Is 11:1, 40:5; Lk 3:6]
(Recite when there is no entrance song)

A branch shall sprout from the root of Jesse, and the glory of the Lord will fill the whole earth, and all flesh will see the salvation of God.

Greeting
(The sign of the cross is made here)

P — The Lord be with you. All — And with your spirit.

Introduction
(The priest may address the assembly with these or other similar words)

P — Today we celebrate what used to be known as the “Golden Mass” (Missa Aurea) which in Advent commemorates the Annunciation and the actual start of the earthly life of Jesus, God-made-man. Let us pray in this Eucharist that our devotion to Mary may proceed from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God and are moved to filial love toward her and to the imitation of her virtues.

Penitential Act

P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

(Pause)

P — Have mercy on us, O Lord. All — For we have sinned against you.

P — Show us, O Lord, your mercy. All — And grant us your salvation.

P — May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All — Amen.

First Reading [Is 7:10-14]
(Sit)

Isaiah tells Ahaz that as a sign of God’s concern for his people, a son will be born who will be called Emmanuel. This prophecy is perfectly fulfilled in Jesus who is “God with us” in the truest sense of the word.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

THE LORD spoke to Ahaz: Ask for a sign from the Lord, your God; let it be deep as the nether world, or high as the sky! But Ahaz answered, “I will not ask! I will not tempt the Lord!” Then Isaiah said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary men, must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.

— The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 24)

R — Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.

sr. m.c.a. parco, fsp

Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.

1. The Lord’s are the earth and its fullness,/ the world and those who dwell in it./ For he founded it upon the seas/ and established it upon the rivers. (R)

2. Who can ascend the mountain of the Lord?/ or who may stand in his holy place?/ He whose hands are sinless,/ whose heart is clean,/ who desires not what is vain. (R)

3. He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,/ a reward from God his savior./ Such is the race that seeks for him,/ that seeks the face of the God of Jacob. (R)

Alleluia (Stand)

All — Alleluia, alleluia. O Key of David, opening the gates of God’s eternal Kingdom: come and free the prisoners of darkness! Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Lk 1:26-38)

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
All — Glory to you, O Lord.

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
P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All — It is right and just.
P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.
For all the oracles of the prophets foretold him, the Virgin Mother longed for him with love beyond all telling, John the Baptist sang of his coming and proclaimed his presence when he came.
It is by his gift that already we rejoice at the mystery of his Nativity, so that he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise.
And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts of Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:
All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
(Kneel)
Acclamation (Stand)
All — We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection, until you come again.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of the Gifts
(Stand)
P — Pray, brethren...
All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings
P — Look with favor, Lord, upon the one sacrifice of Christ, that, by sharing in this mystery, we may receive the blessings which we long for in faith and in hope.
Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Preface (Advent II)
P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.
P — Lift up your hearts.
All — We lift them up to the Lord.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord’s Prayer
All — Our Father...
P — Deliver us, Lord...
All — For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion
(Kneel)
P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.
All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.
Communion Antiphon  
(Lk 1:31)  

The Angel said to Mary:  
Behold, you will conceive and  
bear a son and you shall name  
him Jesus.  

Prayer after Communion  
(Stand)  

P — Let us pray. (Pause)  
Lord God, defend with your  
divine power those whom  
you nourish with heavenly  
gifts, so that, blessed by this  
sacrament, we may rejoice in  
the peace which you alone  
can give.  
We ask this through Jesus  
Christ our Lord.  
All — Amen.  

THE CONCLUDING RITES  

P — The Lord be with you.  
All — And with your spirit.  

Solemn Blessing  

P — Bow down for the  
blessing. (Pause)  
May the almighty and  
merciful God, by whose grace  
you have placed your faith in  
the First Coming of His Only  
Begotten Son and yearn for  
his coming again, sanctify you  
by the radiance of Christ’s  
Advent and enrich you with  
his blessing.  
All — Amen.  

P — As you run the race of this  
present life, may he make you  
firm in faith, joyful in hope, and  
active in charity.  
All — Amen.  

P — So that, rejoicing now with  
devotion at the Redeemer’s  
coming in the flesh, you may  
be endowed with the rich  
reward of eternal life when he  
comes again in majesty.  
All — Amen.  

P — And may the blessing of the  
almighty God, the Father,  
and the Son, (†) and the Holy  
Spirit, come down on you and  
remain with you for ever.  
All — Amen.  

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<th>MEDIUM</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sambhay Sunday Missalette (English or Filipino)</td>
<td>1 SUNDAY</td>
<td>P 4,000</td>
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<td>Sambhay Sunday Missalette (Hiligaynon)</td>
<td>1 SUNDAY</td>
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SOCIETY OF ST PAUL  

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GIVE JESUS  

BE A PRIEST OR BROTHER OF MASS MEDIA...  
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Dismissal  

P — Go and announce the  
Gospel of the Lord.  
All — Thanks be to God.