

Solemnity of the Annunciation
Episcopal Ordination for Myron Cotta
3/25/14

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.”
“No temas, María, porque has encontrado el favor de Dios.” The gospel narratives are saturated with the nearness of God, la proximidad de Dios. The kingdom of God unfolded in mysterious ways both confounding and close. In the gospel narrative today, the waiting of centuries of patriarchs and prophets was over. God was knocking at the door of a home in Nazareth. He was peering through the window of Mary’s soul, “Do not be afraid.” The Spirit hovered over Mary as it had once fluttered over the watery abyss in the quiet moments before the first blooming of creation. Then, only God’s word was needed to spark an expanding universe. Now, in that humble moment God’s word waited on Mary’s word. The creator waited on his youthful creation as her heart pondered and as her lips poised to say, “May it be done to me according to your word.” En este intercambio sencillo, el gozo tocó la tierra como el cielo.

The new creation was forged through a dialogue between heaven and earth. The incarnation was wrapped in the silence of both God and Mary listening for one another’s voice, feeling each other’s desire to be so close. Salvation was heard in that mystical exchange. God’s saving salutation found echo in Mary’s

redeeming reply. Divine favor harmonized with the faithful fervor of a human heart. The Kingdom's joy came to Mary and in haste she would carry this kingdom to grace the heart and home of Elizabeth. Even before Mary's feet crossed the threshold of her cousin's house, her voice, still echoing with the joy of God's favor stirring in her womb, would say, "My soul rejoices in God my savior." El gozo del cielo fue transmitido por María a los oídos, primero los de su prima Isabel y luego del todo el mundo.

The gleeful tremors of that young soul now reverberate within this Cathedral Church as the people of God gather around our son and brother, Myron Cotta. God has favored you, Myron. The Spirit's wings linger over this assembly. The Spirit brings its saving shadow over you. Like Mary, the mother of Jesus, you are being sent to bring the *Evangelii Gaudium*, el gozo del evangelio, a *Alegria do Evangelho*, the Joy of the Gospel.

The Holy Father, Pope Francis's recent apostolic exhortation under that title, *Evangelii Gaudium*, serves as a reminder of what is most compelling and persuasive about the spirit and message of the gospel, the joy which the Lord Jesus desires to give us and to make complete in us: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete."

The joy of Jesus thrilled Mary's heart. With all of Israel she was waiting, expecting the Lord's coming. She who patiently expected the Lord became the expectant mother of hope and a vessel brimming over with joy. Lo que todo el mundo esperaba, ya María se quedó esperando para dar a luz una nueva creación.

Her gladness would be remembered as a powerful prophetic sign, a sign of contradiction. The Book of the Apocalypse borrowed her poetic and prophetic image to convey the Church in the birthing pangs of the new creation while terrible forces threatened to devour her joyful progeny.

The joy shared by Mary and the Church is not conditioned by favorable circumstances or optimistic speculations. Through the pilgrim journey of faith, the Church's pregnant hope has always been threatened and tested as it is so now. Our joy is in the Lord. El gozo del evangelio está enraizado en el Señor. Es un tesoro que el mundo no puede arrebatarlo.

St. Paul reminds you, Myron, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I say it again, rejoice." This is a treasure no one can take from you as long as this joy is nourished by the eternal spring of life-giving water that flows from the sacred heart of Christ. El sagrado corazón de Jesús es la fuente inagotable del gozo cristiano.

Unite yourself to the heart of Christ. Únense al sagrado corazón de Cristo. Pray that yours may each day be conformed to the heart of the Good Shepherd. Ruega para que tenga la mente de Cristo. Ask the Father to grant that your mind may be that of Christ, “who humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.” (Phil. 2.8) Giving both your heart and mind to Christ Jesus you will take on the yoke that is easy and the burden that is light because the Lord will gladly bear it with you.

This is the burden of *veritas in caritate*, the truth in charity, as well as the *caritas in veritate*, the charity in truth. The Church has no truth that cannot be pronounced in charity nor is there any charity not rooted in truth. We distort the truth of the gospel if we do not act with charity. Sincere charity can only lead others to the truth of Christ.

These are the arms of the cross to which Paul bound himself as do all those who take up the apostolic tradition. The truth of the cross will set us free. The love of the cross casts out all fear. The truth and charity of Christ crucified is foolish for some and a stumbling block for others. Myron, find in His cross the wisdom and power of God that will give your ministry a joyful consolation with which you may console a wearied, worried world. La cruz es la verdad proclamada con caridad. Es la caridad que habla más elocuentemente la verdad de Cristo.

Make it your duty as it is all of ours, to bring this joyful message to the poor. The unborn, the unemployed, undocumented, the unwanted -- these are the un-people, the no-people whom God calls his people. He reminds us that where he is, there will my disciple be. Let us together seek the Lord among his people. May we approach our brothers and sisters in need with the same reverence we now approach these sacred mysteries. Guardemos siempre el deber de reverenciar al próximo con la misma devoción con que acerquemos estos sagrados misterios. Reverenciamos al pobre igual como nuestras manos tomen la Eucaristía.

As we now take up the task given to us by the mandate from the Holy See, let us remember that these mysteries as well as all those for which we are humble stewards flow from the awesome mystery of the Lord's saving sacrifice. As the author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us today, "By this 'will,' we have been consecrated through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all." Mary's joyful consent is a part of this one sacrifice as your consent this day will also be. May the joy she found in her Son, our Savior, now be yours. May Christ bring to completion His joy in you. Espero que el gozo la Virgen María encontró en su hijo, Jesús sea el mismo en ti. Que en ti alcance este gozo su plenitud.