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Annunciation to zechariah

Skip to content Home / C14th -C16th manuscripts TEXT The main initials introduce the following pieces of chant: 1r: "Reges videbunt ... Iohannes est nomen eius ... Ipse preibit ... Nazareus vocabitur puer iste ..." 1v: "Gabriel angelus apparuit Zacharie ... Erit enim magnus coram domino ... Ipse preibit ..." 2r: "Erit enim magnus coram domino ... Locutus est angelus domini ad Zachariam ..." 2v: "Iste puer magnus ... Ingresso Zacharia templum domini ... Et Zacharias turbatus est ... Gloria patri et filio et spiritui" These texts are from the feast of John the Baptist (24 June; 3 months after the feast of the Annunciation on 25 March), and concern the narrative in the Gospel of Luke 1:5-13, in which the angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah while he was ministering at the altar of incense, to foretell the birth of his son to his barren wife Elizabeth, despite the fact that they were both 'well advanced in years'. DECORATION The antiphons decorated with large initials alternately red or blue, with fine reserved designs of lush acanthus and other penwork ornament in the opposite colour, versicles decorated with large initials in plain back stroked with red and with fine ornament (1v), and figurative pen-drawings of a bird (2r), a cherub (2v), and The Annunciation to Zechariah (2v). The latter shows Gabriel, perhaps standing on a cloud, appearing to Zechariah, who kneels at the altar. This initial appears immediately after chant describing how the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias when he enters the temple, and introduces the chant in which Zacharias, on seeing Gabriel, is afraid. The drawing of the figurative and the foliate decoration is by an accomplished draughtsman, who was able to achieve a very three-dimensional effect and very fleshy acanthus using a single colour, with simple hatching and cross-hatching. This is a fine example of the sort of late medieval Antiphony that was so large that several monks could sing at once. The decoration is modest but of high quality. Title: Annunciation to ZechariahArtist: Domenico GhirlandaioMedium: FrescoSize: tbdDate: 1490Location: Tornabuoni Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence.Luke 1:5-25: Herod was king of Judea. During the time he was ruling, there was a priest named Zechariah. He belonged to a group of priests named after Abijah. His wife Elizabeth also came from the family line of Aaron. Both of them did what was right in God's eyes. They obeyed all the Lord's commandments and rules faithfully. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was not able to have any. And they were both very old. One day Zechariah's group was on duty. He was serving as a priest in God's temple. He happened to be chosen, in the usual way, to go into the temple of the Lord. There he was supposed to burn incense. The time came for this to be done. All who had gathered to worship were praying outside. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah. The angel was standing at the right side of the incense altar. When Zechariah saw him, he was amazed and terrified. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must name him John. He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make many people very glad. He will be important in the Lord's eyes. He must never use wine or other such drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time he is born. He will bring many of Israel's people back to the Lord their God. And he will prepare the way for the Lord. He will have the same spirit and power that Elijah had. He will teach parents how to love their children. He will also teach people who don't obey to be wise and do what is right. In this way, he will prepare a people who are ready for the Lord." Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is old too." The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I serve God. I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will have to be silent. You will not be able to speak until after John is born. That's because you did not believe my words. They will come true when the time is right." During that time, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out. They wondered why he stayed in the temple so long. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple. They knew this because he kept motioning to them. He still could not speak. When his time of service was over, he returned home. After that, his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. She stayed at home for five months. "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days, he has been kind to me. He has taken away my shame among the people."The Biblical episode of the apparition of the Angel to Zechariah is portrayed within magnificent Renaissance church architecture. Zechariah is portrayed on the altar in the centre, with the Angel Gabriel suddenly appearing on his left to announce to him that he will have a son. The scene is crowded with six groups of characters on six different levels. Aside from the group of six maidens on the right, the others are all portraits of contemporary Florentine notables. On the lower left are the Renaissance humanists, including Cristoforo Landino (the one with a black collar) and Agnolo Poliziano (the second from right). The figures standing on the right are relatives of the patron; behind them is a self-portrait of Ghirlandaio (the second from right, next to a youngster with long hair, probably his son or brother, who is also present in the Expulsion of Joachim).Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449 - January 1494) was an Italian Renaissance painter from Florence. Among his many apprentices was the renowned Michelangelo. Ghirlandaio's compositional schema were simultaneously grand and decorous, in keeping with 15th century's restrained and classicizing experimentation. His chiaroscuro, in the sense of realistic shading and three-dimensionalism, was reasonably advanced, as were his perspectives, which he designed on a very elaborate scale by eye alone, without the use of sophisticated mathematics. There are a series of parallels between the Angel Gabriel's visit to Zechariah and his visit to Mary, all of which allude to an important aspect of faith. For example: Both are "troubled" when the angel Gabriel approaches them (Luke 1:12, 29). Gabriel reassures both, saying, "Do not be afraid" (1:13, 30). Both are given the name of the coming child: "John/Jesus" (1:13, 31). Gabriel says of both children, "he will be great" (1:15, 32). The work of the Holy Spirit is referenced (1:15, 35). Both Zechariah and Mary respond with a question (1:18, 34). Eventually, both Zechariah and Mary exalt the Lord in the Canticle and Magnificat respectively (1:68-79; 1:46-55). However, Zechariah doesn't go into his Canticle as directly as Mary does. And this is part of a larger portrayal of Mary in these early chapters as model disciple—one who hears the word of God and acts on it. In fact, there is a subtle difference between the way in which Zechariah and Mary phrase their questions. Zechariah's question could be quite literally (if awkwardly) translated as "According to what will I know this?" (1:18); whereas Mary's question focuses not on how she will know, but simply on how this mysterious birth will come about: "How will this be since I do not know man" (my translation). In other words, we can detect a subtle hint of doubt in Zechariah's question: how can I know this or how can I be certain? For Mary, it's not so much a matter of how can I know—it's more "I know this is true because I trust my source, but I'm dumbfounded as to how it will happen." The angel clarifies the contrast we are drawing, by responding to Zechariah this way: "And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe" (1:20). Elizabeth, on the other hand, proclaims Mary's faith: "Blessed is she who believed that there would be fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (1:45). Zechariah's unbelief results in him being unable to speak; only after John is born and Zechariah confirms the name given by the angel is Zechariah's tongue loosed, giving rise to his great Canticle. Mary, on the other hand, is unwavering in faith from the beginning, offering her "fiat" on behalf of all mankind: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (1:38). Accordingly, she moves straight into her Magnificat, immediately after she has visited Elizabeth. In Luke's Gospel, Jesus draws a subtle distinction between his biological and spiritual family: "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it" (8:21). But a distinction does not necessarily imply a separation. The First in the Order of Faith Mary uniquely communicates her humanity to the Eternal Son of God—and so the Person born to her is the Person of God the Son (and for that reason, she is called "Mother of God"). But Mary is also first in the order of faith: it is she who—par excellence—hears the word of God and does it. Right after her fiat in verse 38, she responds "with haste," going to visit Elizabeth (1:39). Further, St. Luke portrays her as prayerfully entering into this great mystery before her: "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (2:19). And after losing Jesus and finding him (on the third day! 1:46), the text tells us that "they [Mary and Joseph] did not understand the saying that he spoke to them" (1:50). And yet, in faith, Mary "kept all these things in her heart" (2:51). Faith is not necessarily understanding everything perfectly. But it does mean bringing our questions before the Lord as a child, in a disposition of trust. We believe—not because we've examined everything and found it convincing—but because we trust God. And Mary perseveres to the very end, through the Cross and beyond (see John 19:25-27 and Acts 1:14). Mary is our mother and model disciple, showing us the human face of faith, sanctified by God's glorious grace. You May Also Like ... Scripture, Sacrament, and God's Invitation to Intimacy The Despair of Judas versus the Sorrow of Peter: A Lifesaving Difference John the Baptist's Nativity and God's Will Has Ascension's free media strengthened your faith? You can now offer ongoing support for this content with a recurring gift. Support Ascension annunciation to zechariah sermon. annunciation of the birth of john the baptist to zechariah. the annunciation of the angel to zechariah by domenico ghirlandaio

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