

## Advent Audio Retreat 2023 | Episode Two | “Being Present”

### Prayer and reflection resource

Take time this week to be fully present. Sit quietly and notice your breathing. The air you breathe is the air Jesus breathed too. Feel the floor, your chair, whatever is holding you in this space. Be aware of what is below it, reaching down to the earth – part of the same earth that Jesus trod. This is the world in which God became incarnate. Immanuel, God with us.

These two pictures, described in the audio, show the Annunciation to Mary by the angel Gabriel in very different surroundings to that of first century Palestine.



*Annunciation Triptych (Merode Altarpiece) by Robert Campin – [Courtesy of The Met Museum](#)*



*The Annunciation by John Collier – [Courtesy of St Monica's Parish](#)*

How would you depict this scene  
in your own world?

As you are out and about this week, be aware of your surroundings. What can you see that is beautiful? What can you see that is ugly? Where is God?

The following poem, by American poet Brad Aaron Modlin, talks about what we can miss when we are not present. Some things seem trivial, others more significant. While reading this poem, ask yourself “What have I discovered in my life by being present this week?”.

***What You Missed that Day You Were Absent from Fourth Grade***

Mrs. Nelson explained how to stand still and listen  
to the wind, how to find meaning in pumping gas,

how peeling potatoes can be a form of prayer. She took  
questions on how not to feel lost in the dark.

After lunch she distributed worksheets  
that covered ways to remember your grandfather's

voice. Then the class discussed falling asleep  
without feeling you had forgotten to do something else—

something important—and how to believe  
the house you wake in is your home. This prompted

Mrs. Nelson to draw a chalkboard diagram detailing  
how to chant the Psalms during cigarette breaks,

and how not to squirm for sound when your own thoughts  
are all you hear; also, that you have enough.

The English lesson was that *I am*  
is a complete sentence.

And just before the afternoon bell, she made the math equation  
look easy. The one that proves that hundreds of questions,

and feeling cold. and all those nights spent looking  
for whatever it was you lost, and one person

add up to something.

## Resources from Scripture

Consider the following verses. Which speaks to you this week?

### Exodus 3:4

When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush,  
“Moses! Moses!”

And Moses said, “Here I am.”

### 1 Sam 3:10

The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, “Samuel! Samuel!”

Then Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

### Isaiah 6:8

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

### Psalms 95:7

for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if only you would hear his voice,

### Luke 2:38

Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

### 2 Cor 6:2

For he says,

“In the time of my favor I heard you,  
and in the day of salvation I helped you.”

I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.