

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Eliciting Mary's Consent Final Days of Advent, December 17-23 Friday,
December 20, 2013 8:15 AM Is 7:10-14; **Lk 1:26-38** (She is esteemed in the history
of our Church because she was a courageous woman that actually put her life literally in
God's hands.)

Now it's very clear in the Gospel according to Luke that **Jesus is Yahweh**, the God who called Abraham and the God who called Moses and the God who appeared to Gideon, the same God because the title "**Son of God Most High.**" **That was Yahweh's title.** Now you might say, well, yes, Yahweh was God. Well, Yahweh was God, yes, but not God Most High. Even in the Old Testament there was a distinction that later we call the **distinction between the Father and the Son.** They didn't use that terminology, but they said God Most High for what we call the Father who generates the Son, the Son of God Most High. **This being becomes incarnate in this great mystery of which today's gospel is telling us.**

What I think is very interesting is contrasting this gospel and Mary's response to the angel with Zechariah, which was read yesterday. When **Zechariah** got the message that his wife was going to have a child, he said, "Well, how could I know this?" In other words, how can I be sure about this? I mean, yes, you say, but I'm not so sure. That doesn't seem possible to me. And the angel said, "Well, **since you doubt my word you shall be mute.**" And he was.

Now Mary more or less says the same thing. "How can this be?" That's impossible. "I don't know man." I don't have a husband. "I have no relations with a man." But **Mary is not dismissed like poor Zechariah.** She isn't cast into muteness. **She is given an explanation.**

Now you might wonder **why the difference.** Partly, I believe, the difference is that the angel was simply **paying a courtesy call to Zechariah, informing him,** FYI, for your information, Zechariah, this is going to happen. It's already in the works, whereas with Mary it wasn't. Gabriel didn't come to Mary FYI, oh, for your information, Mary. Rather, **Gabriel**

came eliciting Mary's consent, although it may not always seem that way. It seems like simply an announcement, but it isn't really, and the Fathers of the Church never thought it was. They always interpreted this as a request, as an invitation. It would please God very much, Mary, if this were to happen. And so this ends with her consent. **Mary said, "Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord."** She didn't have to say that. It's very essential that she did. She decided to do as God asked, even though it was actually very precarious for her.

Now with Zechariah, there was no risk for Zechariah, or for that matter Elizabeth, but Mary to have a child before she was actually legally wedded, before she actually ever came together with her husband, although she was betrothed, that was actually very risky. So now she is a woman of great courage. She is saying, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, of Yahweh. **I am Yahweh's handmaid.** May it be done to me according to your word." And it's because **Mary consented** that she became the mother of God. She's didn't have to consent. She didn't have to become the mother of God. And **this is why she is esteemed in the history of our Church, because she was a courageous woman that actually put her life literally in God's hands** and, therefore, made a tremendous act of trust. In this **she becomes the first disciple of her Son.**