

Kids' Chronicle

An angel visits Mary

BY JOE SARNICOLA

In Nazareth, a small town in the country of Galilee, a young woman was praying. Her name was Mary. She was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David, one of the first kings of Israel.

The room in which Mary knelt was small, with only modest furnishings, but it was clean and comfortable. She prayed often in that room, enjoying the privacy to talk to God.

Although the sun had not completely set, the room was almost dark, because the windows were small. As Mary rose to fill the lamp with oil, a faint circle of light floated in through the open window. The circle danced and began to grow larger and glow brighter. The brightness flooded the room and chased away any shadows. Mary jumped back in fear as the figure of a man appeared inside the light.

"Do not fear," the man said. "I am an angel sent from God. I bring a message of peace. God has seen your faithfulness and has chosen you for a great blessing."

"A blessing?" Mary asked. "But I am only a poor Nazarene girl."

"You will soon bear a son," the angel said. "He will be the son of God, the Lord, the king with an eternal kingdom."

"A son?" Mary covered her mouth with her hand as she spoke. "But I am not yet married. How can such a thing happen?"

"A warm wind, which will be the spirit of God, will fill this room and engulf you in the power of the Lord. After that you will carry the son of God."

"Is this what happened to my Aunt Elizabeth?" Mary asked.

Elizabeth was old and without son or daughter, yet word had reached Mary and her family that Elizabeth was going to have a baby.

"God blessed the union of Elizabeth and Zechariah and they will now have a child born to them," the angel said. "God can do all things."

Mary bowed before the angel and said,



Illustration by Amy Sundstrom

"I am a daughter of the Lord. If this is his wish for my life, I will obey and serve him."

The angel left and the room became dark. The sun had dropped below the horizon and the moon was in its new phase.

The next morning Mary rose early, saddled the mule and rode to Judea. There she found Elizabeth at home. At the sound of Mary's voice, the baby in Elizabeth's womb moved.

The joy of the Lord filled Elizabeth and she said, "You are the most blessed

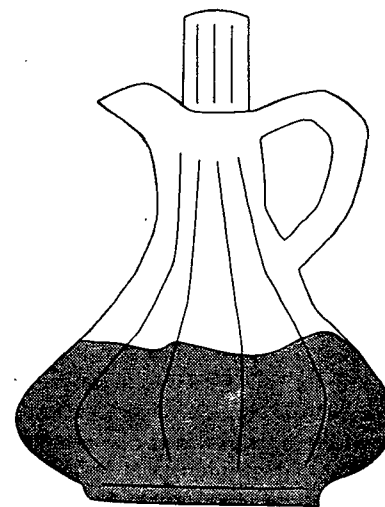
woman on earth, and the baby you will bear is a child like no other. Who am I that the mother of the son of God should call on me?"

The two women embraced and praised God for his blessings to them.

Q&A

READ MORE ABOUT IT:
Luke 1

1. Who was Joseph's ancestor?
2. Who was Mary's aunt?



Bible Accent

One of the gifts brought to the newborn Jesus by the three wise men was myrrh, a very fragrant gummy perfume that comes from India and Arabia.

Myrrh is made from a woody plant with thorns. In Jesus' day, it was rare and expensive and was used only by very rich people and members of royalty. The perfume was also used as a beauty lotion and was used in ancient times for embalming.

By presenting this gift to Jesus, the wise men were declaring that Jesus was a king.

The other gifts they brought were frankincense, another gummy perfume, and gold.

St. Nicholas

There have probably been more legends than facts written about St. Nicholas.

One story claims he gave gold coins to a poor man so that the man's daughters would not have to be sold into slavery.

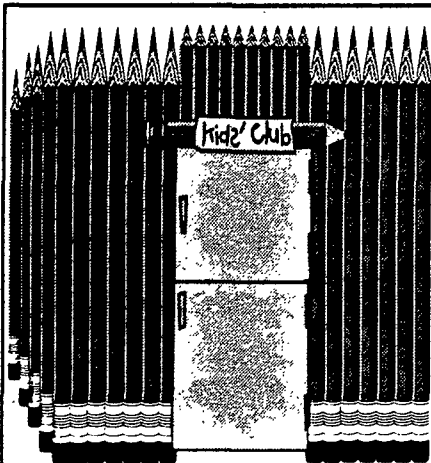
Another says St. Nicholas' spirit has been seen by sailors caught in storms at sea. Several churches that have been built on coastlines and are visible from the ocean are named after St. Nicholas in memory of this tale.

Some of the legends about St. Nicholas are the basis for the Christmas visitor we call Santa Claus. The feast day of St. Nicholas is Dec. 6.

Puzzle

Match the Bible characters with the reference that describes their visitations by angels. Answers can be found on Page 12.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 1. Lot | (a) Judges 6:12 |
| 2. Gideon | (b) Revelation 5:2 |
| 3. Elijah | (c) 1 Kings 19:5 |
| 4. Zechariah | (d) Luke 1:11 |
| 5. John | (e) Genesis 19:1 |



Essay

You can win a \$50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) answering this question:

If God sent an angel to visit the president, what do you think God's message would be?

Send your essay — including name, home address, telephone number, school and grade — to Catholic Courier, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Deadline for entries is Jan. 9, 1997. The winner will be notified by phone and receive the savings bond by mail. In addition, the winner's essay will be published in an upcoming issue of Kids' Chronicle.

Last month's winner was Collin Byrne, a third-grade student at Holy Cross School, Rochester. In response to the question, How did Jesus show he was a good shepherd? he wrote:

Jesus takes care of all his people even those who don't always follow him. He is like the shepherd who looks for his lost sheep, because he loves His people even if they wander away. The people love Jesus for caring about them like the sheep love their shepherd.

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