Christmas 2011

Choices

'Have you ever wondered what would have happened if Mary had said 'No' to the Angel? When the Angel Gabriel visited Mary, he told her that she had been chosen especially by God to bear the Christ child. At no time did God force Mary to do anything against her own will. After questioning the Angel, and then pondering in her heart for a time, Mary said 'Let it be so, according to your will.' In other words, Mary said 'Yes'.

How often do we face a similar situation of having to make a choice where we can freely decide to say 'Yes' or 'No'? I think these moments happen a lot in our lives, sometimes almost daily. We are offered all sorts of invitations, some as small as the offer of a cup of tea or a glass of water. Other times we are offered more life changing choices, such as a proposal of marriage or a job offer in another city or country.

One of the great things I have discovered in my own life, and especially with my own walk with God, is that we are always given a choice. How to make that choice depends on many factors. We often ask family or friends for advice or guidance. We sometimes lie awake at night worrying [or perhaps simply pondering] and trying to weigh up all the pros and cons.

However we reach a decision, the one thing I am sure of is that God always gives us a choice. He does not hold us captive or force us to do anything in any particular way. We are free to make our choices but we must always remember that in doing so, we are thereby responsible for the outcomes. We cannot blame God or anyone else for our free choices.

This Christmas, I pray that we might all follow the example of Mary and ponder things in our hearts and offer them to God in prayer before making decisions. Only then can we be sure that the still small voice guiding us is God's and not our own wants and desires.