**How shall I know this?**

**SATURDAY DICEMBER 19 (Lk 1,5-25)**

Our God is the Almighty Creator. He made all things, all the visible and invisible universe and not from pre-existing matter. Not only is He the Creator, He is also the Lord. At any moment he can say a Word to everything that exists and everything puts itself in obedience. This truth of our God is not only revealed, it is also manifested in history. Indeed, the story of the children of Abraham begins with a man advanced in years and a woman who is also elderly and has always been sterile. Here is what Genesis tells us: *"Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him. "There in the tent," he replied. One of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah will then have a son." Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent, just behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years, and Sarah had stopped having her womanly periods. So Sarah laughed to herself and said, "Now that I am so withered and my husband is so old, am I still to have sexual pleasure?" But the LORD said to Abraham: "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I really bear a child, old as I am?' Is anything too marvelous for the LORD to do? At the appointed time, about this time next year, I will return to you, and Sarah will have a son." Because she was afraid, Sarah dissembled, saying, "I didn't laugh." But he said, "Yes you did." (Gen 18,9-15).* Zechariah knows what happened at the origins of the history of the chosen people. He knows all the other great works of the Lord. He should never have doubted. Because of this doubt, he will remain mute until everything is done according to the Angel’s Words. He knows God and he knows that he is the Almighty.

*In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in years. Once when he was serving as priest in his division's turn before God, according to the practice of the priestly service, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense. Then, when the whole assembly of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was troubled by what he saw, and fear came upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of (the) Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah**[7](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/__PWK.HTM%22%20%5Cl%20%22%243HD) to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord." Then Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel said to him in reply, "I am Gabriel, who stand before God. I was sent to speak to you and to announce to you this good news .But now you will be speechless and unable to talk  until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time." Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and were amazed that he stayed so long in the sanctuary. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He was gesturing to them but remained mute. Then, when his days of ministry were completed, he went home. After this time his wife Elizabeth conceived, and she went into seclusion for five months, saying, "So has the Lord done for me at a time when he has seen fit to take away my disgrace before others."*

What happened in Zechariah is also a sign for us, disciples of Jesus. We will always remain mute before the whole world, if we do not believe that every Word of the Gospel is fulfilled. Guardian of the Word is the Lord. He is always vigilant so that everything happens according to what he said, prophesied, announced, revealed. Today our silence is driving the world adrift. It is urgent that we take back and proclaim the Word.

Mother of Redemption, Angels and Saints, make that we proclaim the works of our God.