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25 March 2009: Giles Harris-Evans of St Peter's Church, Petersfield

Examples there for us all to see

March 25 is a special day for Christians - it is the celebration of the visit of the Angel Gabriel to Mary at Nazareth.

What in essence is this event? It is the start of a new plan to bring hope to a human race that even 2,000 years ago was full of violence, hunger, persecution and suffering.

Rome ruled its empire all around the Mediterranean and beyond and this was the time that God chose to intervene in the form of a man.

But in order to enter the world in human form, he needed a mother and this is where Mary of Nazareth comes in. Gabriel propositioned Mary with the prospect of being 'God's mother'. She agreed and the rest is in the Gospel and part of history.

For Christians and all people of goodwill the lesson is: Can I rise to the possibilities before me or am I sunk in self obsession and my own business? It is all too easy to let opportunities slip by.

In my daily paper, one of my favourite pages is the biographies of people who have died which have been sent in by friends and family.

Time and again these people made a difference in a positive way giving others help and encouragement. Are we open to learn from such good examples? Thank God for Mary of Nazareth.