

THE ANNUNCIATION – 25th March



The annunciation is one of the most popular of all subjects in Christian Art. The first picture, taken from a thirteenth century embroidered book binding shows all the traditional elements associated with the scene: the angel Gabriel and Mary herself, a flower, usually a lily, and a dove representing the Holy Spirit descending on Mary. This traditional depiction can also be seen in the paintings by Fra Angelico (1440) and Botticelli (1489), although the settings are very different, Fra Angelico placing the scene in a simple cloister, while Botticelli chose an opulent contemporary house.



The final picture, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti painting in 19th Century England, also contains the traditional elements: both the lily and the dove are there. But by shifting the angle, Rossetti places the focus on Mary. Here too the setting and the clothes are simple and domestic. Gabriel is also portrayed more simply, without wings, more like the Angels who visited Abraham in *Genesis 18* and Manoah and his wife in *Judges 13* who could easily be mistaken for human visitors.

For 19th Century version on more traditional lines, look at the Kempe window in the chancel of St Bridget's.

