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Holy Monday – The Feast of Annunciation
25 March 2013
Grace-Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

Today happens to be March 25th.

March 25th is exactly 9 months before December 25th.

December 25th is Christmas—the birth of Jesus from the Virgin Mary.

March 25th is the Annunciation—the conception of Jesus in Mary's womb,
by way of the Word of Gabriel to Mary.

There was this old tradition in the Church that Saints died on the day of their conception—
their birthdays weren't always recorded—but their death days were.

So, at some point in the Church's history, March 25th was celebrated as the both the day of our
Lord's death, and also the day of His conception.

December 25th then became the day of His birth—hence our date for Christmas.

Now, to speak of the conception of Christ at the beginning of Holy Week may seem a bit odd.

Conception and birth are times for joy; death is a time for sorrow.

But with Christ, everything is turned on its head!

The flesh and blood of Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born by the Virgin Mary,
is the same Jesus who entered Jerusalem,
whose feet were washed by the tears of Mary Magdalene,
whose cheek was kissed by Judas for betrayal,
whose back was scourged,
and brow was pierced,
and whose hands and feet were nailed to the cross.

The Jesus who died for us is a Jesus with real flesh and real blood—
who was truly conceived and born, lived, and died.

And it's this real—flesh and blood—Jesus, whose story we hear again today.

Like Mary's, our hearts are pierced with sorrow—
and yet we know that this real Jesus gave His flesh and blood *for us*.

It was for our flesh and our blood that He bled, and suffered, and died.

The Lord loves the body—yours and His.

And so by His Word, just like to Mary, He draws you into His body, His life, His flesh, His
blood, His death, and then, on the third day, His resurrection—
all by putting His body into yours.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit