

Happy New Year and Solemnity of Mary Mother of God!

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*The Dunedain
Rings*

A Monthly Reflection on Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*

The One Ring having been destroyed, the Eagles carry Frodo and Samwise from the Crack of Doom to nice, comfortable beds in Ithilien, where they are healed by the King and given plenty of time to rest. So one day they wake up around noon. Sam has a question for Gandalf:

“Noon?” said Sam, trying to calculate. “Noon of what day?”

“The fourteenth of the New Year,” said Gandalf, “or if you like, the eighth day of April in the Shire reckoning. But in Gondor the New Year will always now begin upon the twenty-fifth of March when Sauron fell, and when you were brought out of the fire to the King. He has tended you, and now he awaits you. You shall eat and drink with him. When you are ready I will lead you to him.”¹

Wow! This passage is very rich in Christological and Marian imagery. For on the twenty-fifth of March in all the world of Christendom, the Annunciation is commemorated. Truly, this day is the Dawn of our Salvation. On this day Blessed Mary ever-virgin gave her consent for God to become incarnate in her womb. On this day in Middle-earth Sauron fell, and on this day in our Earth Satan fell. For men would now receive holy liberation from the Dark Lord: God's Anointed King would soon offer the Total Gift and Self-Oblation to the Father that would free men from Satan's dominion. This wondrous freedom of the children of God is made possible through the fiat of a maiden totally full of love for the King, the Incarnate God. Thus it became possible for us slaves of Satan and sin to “be brought out of the fire [of Hell] to the King.” Now we eat the King's Body and drink the King's Blood in the great Thanksgiving Feast of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, but one day “when you are ready” Blessed Mary “will lead you to him.” O Happy Fault that won for us so great a Redeemer King – and so great a Maiden Queen!

Ad Jesum per Mariam.

Praised be Jesus Christ, now and forever!

¹ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994) 247.