

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR B 2020

The Word of God today focuses on the circumstances leading up to the first coming of Jesus, the event which sets the pattern for His coming to us now and at the end of time. The readings also describe God's promise to David and its fulfillment in Jesus, the Son of David. The Gospel in a special way stresses the key role of Mary in our salvation history.

The first reading surprises us by telling us how God through the Prophet Nathan rejects David's offer to build Him a house. Instead, God promises David that he will have a long line of royal descendants culminating with a final king, Jesus Christ. Of course, this King Jesus chose for His Temple, a human person who is full of grace, obedience and love. That Temple was Mary!

Today's Gospel surprises us by telling us that this King would be born to an ordinary virgin, through the Holy Spirit, and that Jesus would become a descendant of David. This would occur through Joseph, Mary's betrothed husband and the legal father of her Son, as Joseph was "of the house of David." The Gospel also reminds us that God's promise is best fulfilled not in buildings, or even great kings like Solomon, but rather in humble souls like Mary who trusted in God's promises.

It took deep faith and trust in God for Mary to have the courage to say yes to God. There were a lot of unknowns. May we be grateful that our Blessed Mother Mary accepted and cooperated with God's plan giving us a model of deep abiding faith in God and a desire to live our lives in perfect conformity to God's will.

Mary's assent to God's plan was not a onetime thing. She lived this faithfulness every day from the moment of the annunciation forward amid the joys and sorrows of her life. May we learn from her so that we too may use the graces we got at our baptisms to always do the will of God.

As a response, may we always give a courageous and generous "yes" to God. True obedience comes from a free choice made in the light of what is good. It often requires a great deal of courage because it can involve going against the tide of social expectations. But it is by saying, with Joseph and Mary, a wholehearted and totally unconditional "Yes" to Jesus that He will be re-born in us.

We also need to try to learn God's plan for our lives. The Good News today is not only that God is making a provision for the salvation of all His people, but also that He has a plan for each one of us. We may be required to serve our God in ordinary or in extra ordinary ways like Mary. God desires not the skill of our hands but the love of our hearts. Let us show our gratitude to God by living as true followers of His Son always saying to Him: "here I am Lord to do your will."

So why the extra ordinary favor done to Mary alone? As St. Paul tells the Romans today; when the mystery of Jesus Christ hidden for many ages was finally revealed, God expected human beings to believe and obey. Mary was the first disciple of Christ to believe and obey. If we are to emulate her example, then we have to strive to open ourselves completely to the will of God always and everywhere. This will allow Him to work in our lives, surprising us with whatever He has in store for us.

St. Francis of Assisi said, "We are the mother of Christ when we carry Him in our hearts and we give birth to Him through our holy works which ought to shine on others by our example." Going into the Christmas season, let our works shine forth signaling the presence of Christ among us.

As Advent draws to an end this week, and we prepare to welcome Christmas, may we re-echo Mary's words: "Let your Will be done". May our hearts be ready to receive Him when He comes. Amen.