

Homily for Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 20, 2020

In our First Reading today, we hear of the promise The Lord made to David. It was a promise that went beyond David's kingship. It was a promise for all of David's descendants.

"...I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever."

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If we go further into this passage, we read of David's response, "Then King David went in and sat in the LORD's presence and said, "Who am I, Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you should have brought me so far? And yet even this is too little in your sight, Lord GOD!"

Those words have walked with me for decades. I first really noticed them while on retreat in Hawaii. (Okay, so who would not feel that way when blessed to be in an exotic location?) I have been blessed to recall these words many times in my priesthood. The words came to me again when I was assigned here over ten years ago. And I shared them with all of you my first Sunday here at Saint Lawrence as your new pastor.

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God's promise to David was partially fulfilled in David's son Solomon. Later, the Kingdom was eventually destroyed as a political power in the Middle-East. However, as a promise, the Hebrew faithful remembered these words and understood them to be a prophecy that the Lord of Truth and Love would one day fulfill in its totality. They awaited an Anointed One. They awaited the Messiah. They awaited the Christ.

And that prophecy was fulfilled in Jesus. It was fulfilled in an unexpected way, and yet an even greater way. Because the Christ truly is God's Son, He truly is God the Son.

We can all find a home with the words, “Who am I, Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you should have brought me so far? And yet even this is too little in your sight, Lord GOD!”

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Those words are part of Mary’s answer to the angel Gabriel. Her expectations for the future – as simple as they may have been for a person of her time – were still plans for a particular future with Joseph in Nazareth. God’s plans were far grander for her. But they were still a change in her plans.

As one bishop said, “It takes real courage to actually hear God asking something of us that is different from what we were already planning for ourselves.”

Mary had courage. Mary said yes. And because of her ‘yes’ we now know her as Our Blessed Mother.

Let us find time in the busy activities of these next few days to ponder the plan and promises of God, and of the responses of our examples in faith – David and Mary.

- “I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever.”**

- “Who am I, Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you should have brought me so far? And yet even this is too little in your sight, Lord GOD!”**

- “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”**