

Fourth Sunday of Advent**Lectionary: 11****Reading 1: 2 Sm. 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16****Responsorial Psalm: Ps. 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29****Reading 2: Rom. 16:25-27****Alleluia: Lk. 1:38****Gospel: Lk. 1:26-38**

In today's readings we hear the story of two fundamental characters of our faith, King David and Mary, the mother of the king of the universe.

In one of those sleepless nights, David plans to build a glorious home for God. A dwelling place where God would be adored and glorified with love by his chosen people. A temple that would remind all the present and future nations the salvific power of the love of God for them. David's intentions were good, the intention of his mind was pure, so much so that the prophet Nathan tells him, "Do whatever is in your mind, for the Lord is with you!! But God had other plans; it would not be David the one to build God's temple but a son. What David did was accumulate all kinds of precious objects to make it easier for his son to build the temple.

We know that David sinned against God and neighbor; he was not a perfect man. Nevertheless, God's promises cannot be broken by our iniquities. Saint Paul in the letter to Timothy reminds us that God cannot deny himself, that if we are faithless, he remains faithful, (2 Timothy 2:13). This reminds me of a story that bishop Terry J. Steib told one day, that a man was giving a speech and he wanted to say that, "We

stand with God, but he got nervous and instead said, God stands with us.” And he felt so bad because he switched the sentence of who stands with whom. But he actually got it right, God always stands for and with us, he does not retrieve his word. We on the other hand, sometimes we stand for and with God, and other times we don’t. That is what happened also to David, like any other person David was not always faithful to his promises.

Only God keeps his promises and because he is faithful, he sent a messenger to Mary to announce to her the Good News. That she ought to be the perfect temple, the temple that will shape the creator itself, the Mother of God. But Mary was troubled at the words of Gabriel, she did not understand the meaning of the message, Gabriel had to explain to her how this promise would happen.

Notice that the prophet Nathan as well as Gabriel address David and Mary with the same words, “The Lord is with you.” Mary was always with the Lord, from the beginning of time, she was appointed to be the Mother of Jesus. God did prepare the perfect temple in the womb of Mary; Mary’s yes to God is the closest to God’s yes to humanity. Mary cannot deny herself because she was full of grace from the very beginning of time. Because of Mary’s permanent state of grace, she was able to remain and to follow to perfection God’s will. With her yes, she opened for us the salvation awaited from the beginning of time in what is called, “The sweet exchange” which means that God became man to

experience our human limitations, to suffer just like us, he was denied a proper place to be born, he was persecuted from the very beginning of his birth, so that man may be exalted and saved into a divine state.

The Lord was with David and Mary and he is also with you. "Yes, but let's really believe in it, brothers and sisters, God is with us every day we invoke him calling him Father, and he accompanies us, defends us and, always seeks our good. We are not alone in this, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, looks for us, his Spirit that lives in the Church attracts us, here we all have our place, nobody is turned down. In a way, this is the Manger where we are transformed into the divine state, God shapes us into the image of his Son.

Yes, "God is with us" if we love, if we forgive, if we surrender, if we make of our life what the Lord has commanded us. Jesus has not abandoned us, he is here in our midst. With Him everything is possible.

Psalm 88 states, "My love is forever and my loyalty, firmer than the heavens" (Ps. 88). As we get ready for Christmas, our goal is to be with the Lord, to learn how to live in a permanent state of grace like Mary.

The fourth and last purple candle, often called the "Angel's Candle," represents peace. It reminds us of the message of the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." (Lk. 2:14)