

## Advent IV 2020, December 20, 2020

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16, Romans 16:25-27, Luke 1:26-38, Canticle 3 or Canticle 15, *or* Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

On this last Sunday of Advent, our attention is drawn in two different directions, in two different ages. First, we'll hear about the far distant ancient time of King David who wakes up one morning in his Royal Palace fit for a king and looks out his window to see the Ark of the Covenant, the Ark containing the 10 Commandments and believed to be a vessel holding God within in. King David sees the Ark of God, so deeply revered by the Jewish people under a mere tent. David suddenly feels deep in his soul that there's something wrong with this picture. David is in a Royal Palace and God is outside under a tent. So he proposes building a great temple, a temple much greater than his palace, a temple fit for a king of kings.

We get it, hopefully our conscience would nag us too if we were living high on the hog while God got our secondhand castoffs. But God's reaction probably shocked David. God is going to almost snap at David when he says "Did I tell you to build me a temple? Did I ask for a palace?" There's King David in his big house, a crown on his head, his fancy Armani robes, wanting to dress God up, Get God a big palace too, almost like he wants to justify his royal expenditures. Rather than bring God up to David's prosperity, God brings David back down to earth. God reminds David that David came from humble beginnings as a boy, weak and powerless, a shepherd who slept outside alone with mere sheep, un-showered, unhoused, and alone.

Then, instead of joining in the conversation about robes, crowns, and palaces, God talks about actions that should preoccupy a king, about prosperity of the people entrusted to his care, no longer being at war with enemies, a name of honor to be respected and a kingdom that will be eternal.

David probably didn't understand because he couldn't. God talked about the kingdom of David being forever, yet the Babylonians eventually sieged Jerusalem, sacked the city, destroyed the temple and exiled all the Israelites. David's crown ended up in a ditch and the robes were trashed. David's royal family line ended up poor, blue collar workers, like Joseph the carpenter, his descendent.

We're told that the Virgin Mary was betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter, who was from the line of David. God didn't ask for a great palace or temple. He wanted a kingdom that would be eternally different. On the Christ the king Sunday, the Sunday before Advent, our friend mama Kat, brilliantly reminded us how Christ was more of an Un-king in and Un-kingdom compared to our idea of Kings and Kingdoms. Today's readings remind us of that again.

David had no way comprehending what God was planning. Now all this talk of Kings and Kingdoms is dripping in patriarchy and privilege, so that good gentle physician, St. Luke, is going to bring some much-needed femineity into it. He is going to tell us about the power of our Divine God coming to a scared young girl named Mary. We have reason to believe Mary was round 12 years old, young, poor marrying a poor carpenter, completely lacking in power or might. Mary has no palace, no crown, no fancy robes, probably no money or influence, and certainly no swords, and yet the archangel Gabriel calls her God's favorite. Of all the girls around the world and of all the women across time, this frightened young girl is

the one God chooses to be his own human mother, the Theotokes, the God bearer. She will be the gateway to God stepping into humanity, the creator become a creature.

Now at the beginning of this sermon, I said our attention would be drawn in two directions. David saw God in a tent, a tabernacle, and in the Gospel of Luke, we once again see God in a tent or tabernacle only this time Mary is God's human tent and her womb is the tabernacle.

No great Royal Palace of stone and gold but a tent of humility, meekness, and gentleness. Mary is that tabernacle. She is that most highly favored lady who becomes the Queen Mother opening the way for the Un-King who comes to teach us that the Un-kingdom of Eternity will be a rule of love not war, of forgiving not punishing, a royal kingdom where the poor, the frightened, the sick, the lonely are raised up to the heights of divinity.

Go in two different ages, in two different tabernacles, but teaching the same message in both. Like Mary, you and I must also be tabernacles, we must receive God, carry him within us, humbled as our weak old body tents are carrying God to the world, gateways to an eternal kingdom of servant rule. And Mary said "Here I am I, the Servant of God, let it be done with me according to your word."

Like David and Like Mary, let us now listen to God's word and like a seed, let it grow inside us until it becomes an everlasting kingdom, in the line of David, "For Nothing is Impossible with God".

A mystery to David and a mystery even to Mary, A secret of the universe "kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed to us."

Let us listen with the ears of our hearts and then like Our Lady, let us say "Yes" " be it done unto us according to your word"