

ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

4th Sunday of
Advent, Year B
December 20, 2020

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**Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa
Pastor**

For the time being, our Sunday Masses are held outdoors, by the Parish Hall, on Saturdays at 4:30 PM and on Sundays at 8:30 AM. Please come in a face mask and observe social distancing (6 ft. between people of different households).

1st Reading:

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

When King David was settled in his palace, and the LORD had given him rest from his enemies on every side, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" Nathan answered the king, "Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you." But that night the LORD spoke to Nathan and said: "Go, tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Should you build me a house to dwell in?'"

"It was I who took you from the pasture and from the care of the flock to be commander of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth. I will fix a place for my people Israel; I will plant them so that they may dwell in their place without further disturbance. Neither shall the wicked continue to afflict them as they did of old, since the time I first appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also reveals to you that he will establish a

house for you. And when your time comes and you rest with your ancestors, 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."

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm:

"Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord."

The promises of the LORD I will sing forever; through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness. For you have said, "My kindness is established forever"; in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness.

R.

"I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant: Forever will I confirm your posterity and establish your throne for all generations."

R.

"He shall say of me, 'You are my father, my God, the Rock, my savior.' Forever I will maintain my kindness toward him, and my covenant with him stands firm."

R.

2nd Reading:

Romans 16:25-27

Brothers and sisters: To him who can strengthen you, according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings and, according to the command of the eternal God, made known to all nations to bring about the obedience of faith, to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

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

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel:

Luke 1:26-28

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and

pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Acclamation:

Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.

REFLECTING ON THE WORD GUIDEPPOSTS

MARY TEACHES US THE DYNAMICS OF PRAYER: *FIAT* (Let Your Will Be Done):

The Fourth Sunday of Advent, the last before Christmas, invites us to reflect especially on the annunciation of the Lord's birth to the Virgin Mary. Mary is the model of one who is truly prepared to welcome the Savior. She is our final guide to the Incarnation, to an authentic celebration of Christmas. Let us learn from her example.

The Annunciation narrative in Luke 1:26-38 (today's Gospel), shows us the dynamics of authentic prayer: Mary first of all falls SILENT before the heavenly messenger, and only made the query: "How can this be done . . .?" Mary LISTENS intently to the angel's explanation, which is to say, Mary is at prayer, deep prayer. It is not surprising that S-I-L-E-N-T is made up of exactly the same letters as L-I-S-T-E-N. *LISTEN* and *SILENT* are the twin "spiritual postures" of DEEP PRAYER or CONTEMPLATION.

Prayer is conversation with God. In conversing, one also listens. One who does all the talking is by no means a good conversationalist. Prayer is listening to the Word, and the Word may be a message, an event, or a person. One who is at prayer may then be receiving a message, or taking part in an event, or surrendering to a person. In the case of Mary at the Annunciation, she is truly receiving a message from God, truly taking part in the Incarnation event, and truly surrendering herself totally to God. No wonder she is so silent. And the only other word Mary said after the angel's explanation is *FIAT* or "Let His (God's) will be done." This PRAYER-FILLED MOMENT of the Annunciation is the very moment --- O blessed of all moments! --- when the Word begins to become flesh in Mary.

That Mary teaches others this *FIAT* is emphasized in John's Gospel. In the Gospel according to John there is no account of the Annunciation to Mary. Instead, John emphasizes how Mary taught others this attitude of *FIAT* or "God's will be done." This is found in the account of the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11) which Mary, Jesus and his disciples attended. A problematic situation arose when the hosts ran out of wine. Mary then said to Jesus: "**They have no wine.**" Then she said to the servers: "**Do whatever he tells you.**" Mary does not tell the Lord what he should do. For Mary, it is enough that the situation or problem is presented to the Lord. Afterwards, there is need to be SILENT, to LISTEN.

The two essentials of prayer that Mary teaches the servers and all of us today, namely — 1) presenting to the Lord the situation or problem, and 2) listening to what He says — must be the spirit in which every prayer is said, for it to be *FIAT* — "*Let your will be done, Lord, even if it is the opposite of what I am asking.*"

QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- What does God want to bring to birth within me this Advent?
- Reflecting on today's first reading, do I ever fall into David's mistake and imagine that God needs me to "build him a house"? That is, do I imagine "saving" myself, or my neighbors, or my world, for God?
- Am I willing to let God "do the impossible" in and through me?

"If you don't go to bed and go to sleep right now, Santa Claus will not come to our house." This time-honored threat has been used by some desperate parents as a last resort for getting their children to calm down, get into bed, and go to sleep, on Christmas Eve. The admonition is needed when children are in an almost unbearable state of anticipation, thinking about the treasures that will await them under the tree on Christmas morning.

We come now to the last week of our season of anticipation---Advent. It's not Santa, of course, but Jesus whom we await. Can our anticipation match that of kids on Christmas Eve? Ponder over the question and then fill in the blank in this sentence: "If I don't _____, Jesus will not come into my heart this Christmas.

One last thought. Notice the respect God showed Mary in the annunciation. God didn't just tell her she would be the mother of the Son of God. God asked her if she would be and waited for her answer. We have here a cue of how the Son of God can come to us more fully. We have here a cue for how Christmas can fully fill our hearts. God's Son wants to live in each one of us.

As God did with Mary, God waits for each of us to answer him as to whether he is welcome. Are we able to say, as Mary did: "I am the servant of the Lord. I will do whatever you want of me, Oh God"?

As we come to the end of our season of anticipation, we now have to shift to action. The Latin author Seneca, said, "Expecting is the greatest impediment to living. In anticipation of tomorrow, we lose today." Like Mary, we have to respond now and commit to serving, to doing the will of him whose birth we soon will celebrate.

"The greatness of a man (or woman) depends not on what he (she) has done but on what others became because of him (or her)."

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrant:

Brothers and sisters, in union with Mary the Mother of God and with all the angels and saints, let us bring our prayers before God our heavenly Father, saying:

Be born in us, O Lord, be born in the world.

Lector:

Let us pray for peace among the nations and in all the troubled areas of the world . . . for peace where there is violence and people live in fear . . . for peace among neighbors . . . within our families and communities . . . for peace within our hearts . . . we pray,

Let us pray for all children . . . for their safety and well-being . . . for a happy Christmas with those who love them . . . for confidence in all they do and hope for their future . . . we pray,

Let us remember people and members of our community who are struggling with chronic illness or pain and have asked for our prayers . . . for them and for all those who love them and care for them . . . we pray,

We remember those who have died . . . for all those who have died this past year and for those mourning the loss of a loved one who find their loss especially difficult at Christmastime . . . we pray,

We remember in our prayers those who cannot celebrate Christmas together with their families . . . those who serve as missionaries, those in the Armed Forces and stationed far away . . . we pray,

Celebrant: Good and gracious God, hear our prayers this day. As Mary said "Yes" to the Angel, help us to say "Yes" to your plan for us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

From the Retired Religious —THANKS FOR GIVING!

"We are conscious of the great generosity of the many benefactors who support the Retirement Fund for Religious each year," says a Catholic sister. "Support from the fund has been a tremendous blessing to our retired sisters." Thank you for donating to last week's second collection.



Tithes and Offerings:
December 12-13 Sunday
Collections = \$ 861.00
December 7-13 Via Online
Giving = \$ 595.00



We pray for our beloved parishioner +GAIL INMAN who has passed on to the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. We extend our most heartfelt sympathies to John and the whole family and pray for their intentions.



Let us pray for one another, especially for the health of Michael Gordon, Steven Goetz, Matthew Schumaker and family, Yolanda Blaiz Huerta--Urbalejo and family.

REMINDERS:

St. Thomas Indian Mission 2021 CALENDARS are here. Please take one home.

The Boxes of Contribution Envelopes for 2021 are now here. Please pick up yours after Mass.

Please note that some are assigned a new number.

Reason: We have 71 existing parishioners and there are 137 envelope numbers; 66 of those numbers are not in use; so it would help the parish save money by moving some parishioners into the empty slots.

Below is the list of parishioners whose number will be changing:

The number on the left, before the name, is the existing number of the parishioner, until Dec. 31, 2020.

The number on the right, after the name, is the new number of the parishioner starting January 1, 2021:

72 Leatrice Brown 71
75 Margaret Niesen 69
76 Martha Herrera 68
80 Rick & Linda Hirsch 65
83 Stan & Patricia Krajewski 64
85 Amelia Lopez Ortiz 63
87 Dorothea Montague 61
88 Alexandra Morales 59
92 Lawrence & Sonia Thaczak 56
93 Tony & Barbara Sigala 55
95 Mary Scribner 50
97 Jennifer Rico 49
98 Hannah Finnegan 48
99 Gordon and Dolores Osborne 47
100 Joanne & Sharon Bradley 46
103 Carlos & Rosie Gonzalez 45
104 Michael Valdez 43
105 Richard Rasmussen 40
107 Francis & Karen Sanregret 39
109 Paul Skokandich 38
126 Steve Taylor 34
128 Juan & Ofelia Perez 30
129 Mr. & Mrs. McKeveny 29
130 Lorenza Garcia 27
137 John & Gina Arcenas 17

- To those who cannot come to pick up their box of 2021 Contribution envelopes and 2021 Calendars, I will deliver them to you personally within this month, as long as your home address is in Winterhaven or Yuma. I will just leave them quietly at your door.
- To all parishioners, please use your numbered parish contribution envelope for your f Sunday contribution. Doing so will facilitate the counting and posting of your Sunday contributions.
- Our Christmas Masses will be on:
Thursday, December. 24th at 4:30 PM and on Friday, December. 25th at 8:30 AM.

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