

Fourth Sunday of Advent

An angel appears to a man in a dream. The angel offers him a choice - He can have the Wisdom of Solomon, or \$50,000,000. Believing that this was a test from God, the man chooses Wisdom. The next morning, the man is having breakfast with his friends and he recounts the story to them. When he's finished, one friend says, "If you're so wise now, then tell us some words of wisdom." The man says, "I should have taken the money."

Dear Friends,

As we get to the celebration of Christmas, we are prepared liturgically to understand God's plan of salvation works through human cooperation. God's plan is not forced upon us. It depends on humanity's free will and cooperation with God. Today's readings help us to understand this.

In the first reading, Prophet Nathan became an instrument to tell David the King that God is with him throughout his life. God was making sure that he was the author of all success of David. God reminded Nathan how he took care of David from different situations. The lesson for us to learn is God is in charge of everything. God expresses that his presence will be forever.

In the second reading, St. Paul encourages the Romans and us to be an outstanding witness for Christ to the world.

In the gospel, through the angel Gabriel God sent the message to Mary. The angel Gabriel played the prominent role in the beginning of the salvation history. If you read the book of Genesis 1:1 the spirit of God hovers over the waters. The name Gabriel means, "God is my strength." Through the annunciation God strengthened Mary.

Today's gospel reading tell us two things. God's plan of salvation came to us through Mother Mary. God who dwelt in the tent for generation took a human flesh with us as incarnation. God chose Mary with the purpose. Her relative Elizabeth was given the reference to prove that God planned everything very clearly. We all know in the Gospel of John 1:1 A man Named John was sent from God, which we read in last Sunday certified God's definitive plan of salvation for the humankind.

Secondly Mother Mary's yes to the plan of God was also equally important. Through that yes, she cooperated with God's plan. Zachariah was speechless because he doubted God's plan. They both Elizabeth and Zachariah wrote the same name for John. Therefore, Mary's cooperation was a cue for us.

Today as Christians, God loves each and every one of us and he has a plan for each and every one of us. He expects our cooperation and he respects our freedom. As God did with Mary, he waits for each of us to answer him as to whether he is welcome. We need to say a courageous and generous "yes" to God: True obedience comes from a free choice made in the light of what is true and good. Such a self-surrender often requires a great deal of courage because it can involve going against the tide of social expectations.

We need to try to learn God's plan for our lives: The Good News in today's Scripture message is not only that God is making provision for the salvation of His people, but also that He has a plan for each individual person. In many cases, our work for God seems rather ordinary, but each ordinary task which we carry out fits into God's plan in ways that we cannot yet understand. God desires not only the skill of our hands and talents but the love of our hearts.

Let us plan to cooperate to God's plan to receive Jesus into our hearts and homes.