

2020 December 20

fourth Sunday of Advent

Reading:

First: 2 Samuel 7.1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 "I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to me." (1b)

The Psalm: 89 "Forever I will keep my steadfast love for him." (53)

Second: Romans 16.25-27 "Obedience of faith to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever!" (16-18)

The Gospel: Luke 1.26-38 "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word." (7)

His call is risky and troublesome!

Did the Blessed Virgin ever regret her response to God, "*Here I am, the handmaid of the Lord?*" (Luke 1.38a) Not likely. At the time of the Annunciation did she know what would be in store for her? Absolutely, she did not. Would she have said 'no' to the Angel if she were to know the consequences of her Fiat, "*Let it be done unto me according to your word?*" (Luke 1.38b) The Mother of Jesus, whom we know, would never have said a 'no'.

Coming back to the reality of our lives, when we look back to the tasks we have undertaken in our life, the sufferings, and the endurance we have gone through, the pain and rejection we experience now, and if we had an option to say 'no', would we have refused to go through or accept them? In all probability we would have run away from them to the best of our ability. Those of us who see the hand of God and his will for us in those tasks and endurance should feel happy about where we are now. It has been our vocation, God's call. At the end of the day we won't be in a position to claim before God that we had done an excellent job for him. It's all God's work!

Mary never claimed such a credit. Those who have at least a glimpse of her life would testify that she was absolutely true to her response to be the handmaid of God and she completed her life's task in the most perfect manner. She was the absolutely true and perfect mother for the Redeemer of the world, who was born in the cattle shed, lived homeless, and died on the cross, not having even a place to lay his head. On this eve of Christmas we must remember and take into our heart that the first Christmas was heaven's reaching out to earth. It was also an invitation to the humans on earth to partner with heaven in order to bring down heaven onto earth or take earth to heaven.

The way to bring about heaven is a one-way, the way Jesus came down, and the way he went back. Mary was the first, immediate, and intimate partner with Jesus and heaven. His way was through the manger in Bethlehem and through Calvary on to the Cross. The vocation God offers each of us is the same way of the cross. The better we understand this way and be on our march fully and willingly, the faster we will bring down heaven on to earth or take earth to heaven. "*Obedience of faith to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ*" (Romans 16.27), is the food and sustenance on this way. Are we ready to celebrate Jesus through our life, endurance, death, and hope for the resurrection? If so, hurry!, heaven is coming down, or the earth is being taken up! Alleluia!

Fr. George

(The readings of the day are given at the beginning. The numbers in parentheses refer to the quotes from them. Good to go through the readings beforehand to properly understand the Reflections)

