

Homily of Fourth Sunday of Advent Year B, 2020

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16; Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29; Romans 16:25-27;
Luke 1:26-38

Have you ever concluded what you considered an excellent plan, made all necessary arrangements, and when you were about to execute the plan, you were stopped by an authority, or by an incident? Different people respond or react in different ways. Some people get very upset and disobedient. In their disobedience they go ahead with their plan. Some people get very upset; they do not go ahead with their plan; but they refuse to cooperate with other plans. Some people feel disappointed; but are very willing to proceed with alternative plans.

In the first reading, David had a wonderful plan of building a temple for the Lord. Although Prophet Nathan had given David an approval, the Lord did not approve David to build the temple. The Lord's plan was that the temple would be built by David's heir. David accepted the Lord's plan. However, David went ahead to make preparations for building the temple. He procured all the materials needed for the building of the temple (1 Chronicles 22).

Mary, in the Gospel, was engaged to Joseph and was already living with Joseph's family. Before Mary could move into Joseph's house as his wife, the angel brought her the message that she was to conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit. Though troubled, Mary accepted God's plan and said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

David and Mary teach us how not to insist on our plan and will when all signs and signals show that God has other plans instead of ours. We may not be privileged as Mary to experience the appearance of an angel to deliver God's message to us. God speaks to us through his Word, through experiences, and through our fellow human beings. God did not send an angel to David but Prophet Nathan, a human being. It is, therefore, important to read and listen to God's Word, pray and reflect on God's Word, and accept God's Word. It is important to see God's presence in experiences and discern what God is saying through the experiences. It is important to listen to good and wise counsels. We pray, as Jesus prayed while he was on the cross, "not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). For nothing is impossible for God" (Luke 1:37).

David's words to prophet Nathan is quite striking, "Here I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent!" (2 Samuel 7:2). Indeed, many people, many families, many institutions, many places, and so on are living in houses of cedar but have moved God to dwell in a tent. This is to say that God is given little or no consideration in their activities and plans. No wonder we have so much chaos within and around us.

In the Gospel, Mary accepted the Holy Spirit to come upon her and the power of the Most-High to overshadow her, and she became a dwelling place for God. We are, now, in the last week of Advent and a few days to Christmas; we pray that the Holy Spirit comes upon us and the power of the Most-High overshadows us to enable us to become house of cedar for God. Then, God becomes first in our considerations and plans.

Through the candle of love we lit today, may we love God who loves us first (1 John 4:19). The first Christmas happened because "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16). We know that we love God when we share our love for God with fellow human beings. By so doing, Christmas is properly celebrated. Merry Christmas to you!

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