

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - A

Last Sunday, as part of my explanation of the Jesse Tree I mentioned that the promised Messiah would be a descendant of King David.

We hear that promise being made to David himself when the prophet Samuel tells him that the Lord "will establish a house for you ... your house and your kingdom shall endure forever."

David was a very successful king and in the beginning of that first reading we hear of his plan to build a house for God.

However, David was forgetting (again) that all of his victories and all of his accomplishments were God's works, not his.

So God sends Samuel back to David to remind him of everything that God has done for him.

And to remind him that God is in charge, not David.

Our second reading declares that God is the only wise God whose Divine plan, revealed through the prophets, has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

You might say that Jesus is the "who" in God's plan and Mary and Joseph are the "how."

This year's Gospel highlights the role of Mary. It is her "yes" that becomes the doorway of the fulfillment of God's plan.

"May it be done to me according to your word."

## 2

Mary's "yes" is the doorway, but God is master architect of this wondrous work.

God chooses a virgin, prepares her through the singular grace of her Immaculate Conception, and even causes a miraculous birth for her Son's precursor, John the Baptist.

Who is in charge? God ... for whom nothing is impossible.

Yet God would not accomplish the great work of salvation without the free participation of his creature.

What courage that "yes" took on the part of a young Virgin Mary!

God knew that she would need a partner and protector in order to carry out her role, and so gave her Joseph.

Perhaps you have read that Pope Francis has declared a year dedicated to St. Joseph, beginning on December 8th of this year and ending on December 8th, 2021.

In the letter accompanying the announcement, Pope Francis emphasizes the quiet, humble, and hidden nature of St. Joseph's role.

The Pope compares St. Joseph to the thousands of hidden souls who contribute to the common good through their honest, faithful work.

He remarks on how this has been especially true during the months of the current pandemic.

How many people have quietly done their part to keep things going?!

### 3

I have seen the same thing happen here in our parish.

The parish staff have kept our doors open, providing service and much needed solace to so many.

Our liturgical ministers have faithfully shown up to keep our Masses moving smoothly.

You have been coming to Mass offering your prayers and contributions so that the mission of the parish might continue.

I think of everyone who have brought gifts for the angel tree and food for the pantry.

I have witnessed so many volunteers selflessly organize those gifts and distribute that food to those in need.

And, I must mention all of our parishioners who are staying safe in their homes while supporting us by their prayers as well as their donations.

Through the mercy of God's freely given grace we have been given the great honor of cooperating with God in the work of salvation.

During this Year of St. Joseph let us turn to him, as well as to the Virgin Mary, for inspiration and intercession that we might place our lives at the service of God's plan.