

**Fourth Sunday of Advent. Year B, December 24, 2023. God is faithful to the end.**

I will begin by thanking God for his Love and faithfulness and for his journey with us through these weeks of Advent. Like a joke, we have come to the end of Advent, the Christmas preparation.

In less than 24 hours, we shall celebrate the awaiting Christmas, the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will save the fallen world.

I want to draw our attention on this celebration, just as we had a spiritual journey during Advent, so it is with the Christmas celebration, is beyond the wearing of new clothes, eating and drinking; if you have good new clothes, wear them, but if You have not used the old clothes; after all, it is Jesus's birthday, not yours. If you can't afford the food you want, please eat the one you have. It is Jesus' birthday, what he needs from us is to show love to those we meet. I know this has been expressed through different Christmas presents. offered to friends and family, but we can do more to touch lives, even the ones we have not seen. We can create a minute to pray for those who need our prayers. To live up to this day, is a gift of God. Share the joy with others, create time to call old friends and aged people if you know any. Most importantly call families, meet, and discuss the progress of the family and help each other to grow in faith.

Today's liturgy reminds us of God's faithfulness, in our first reading, God made a promised through the prophet Nathan to build an eternal dynasty for David and that his son would sit on the throne of that dynasty. The angel tells us in the Gospel that, that son of David who would sit on his throne forever is Jesus (cf Lk 1:31-32). It is a great privilege for David and Mary to participate in bringing God to the world as man. The two were generous and selfless to cooperate with the Will of God, David opted to build a house for God, though God accepted his generosity, but he has a bigger plan for David. Instead of building house for God, God built an everlasting dynasty for him. It was not the plan of God to have a house, His plan was to make his house in us, to live in us and to identify with us in times of joys and difficulties. We have seen that exemplify in the Blessed Virgin Mary she was the first that God dwells in her. St. Paul said, "and now it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." (Gal 2:20).

In the gospel reading, God's faithfulness was expressed in the Blessed Mary when she conceived through the Holy Spirit. At the beginning of the angel's announcement, Mary was perplexed but she understood this message was not of man but of God, and she say, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."

Sometime in life like Mary we are confused and are afraid of unforeseen circumstances. Angel Gabriel told Mary "Do not be afraid." The same message to us this morning, do not be afraid! He who can strengthen us is visiting us at Christmas, in our hopelessness, helplessness, imperfections, injuries, fear, sickness, shame and confusion, he will change every situation, for nothing is impossible with Him. Like Mary let us say Yes to His will. As we embark on the final phase of Christmas preparations, I wish you all the best. **Merry Christmas in Advance.**

Peace,

Fr. JINGBE Simon

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