

In our first letter today, prophet Nathan helps king David in finding the right place to build a 'dwelling place' for God. While king David lived a royal life in the royal palace, the 'ark of God lays in a tent'.

Friends, *God desires to dwell, where the goodness of man overflows.*

Today's gospel tells us that God wanted to dwell in the most blessed womb, *full of goodness, full of grace*: the womb of Mary. It was necessary that the Incarnate Word should begin his human existence in an environment untouched by sin. And because being born without any stain of sin, she is called Immaculate. It's clear from the words Gabriel.

Gabriel addressed Mary, "*Kaire Miriam*". = "Be happy, the most favoured one". In the Gk. original text, it is translated better as, "*who is grace*". We may understand, Luke's intension that God considers Mary as 'grace' to the world. This is what we pray about Mary in the litany, "mother of grace". (Gen.12:2) God tells Abraham, "you will be a blessing". God who made Abraham, the father of faith, 'a blessing', wants to make Mary, the mother of the believers, "a blessing", a grace.

If you want to know what heaven is like, look at Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary, who was conceived without sin and who has obtained the fullness of salvation, is the perfect example, the icon and image of the Church-the new people of God. God fell so much in love with the world that he took 'human flesh' to dwell among us. Mary so much fell in love with God, that she gifted her flesh to the Eternal Word! Look at Jesus and we see something of Mary. Its through her that the *Eternal Word became incarnate Word*.

Mary makes visible, what is invisible, through her response. We know that Light is composed of a spectrum of colors, but the human eye cannot see those colors. Only when a rainbow arches across the sky are the colors perceptible. Like a rainbow, Mary depicts what is normally hidden from

view, because she shows us the invisible by making it visible, in all its beauty - the redeemed humanity, in all its purity.

Every Christian is called, not just to do good, but *to do "the will of God"*. We may justifiably argue that whatever we try to do is good or intended towards good. But most often, the good we aim at is the *natural good*, based on our own interests. Instead of just doing whatever is right and good for you, only when you make a sincere effort to do what God wants you to do, like Mary, the word becomes flesh in your life, in your family, in your community. There is no better answer to God's will than Mary's total surrender in her answer-**Fiat**.

Friends, Mary is given to us as a blessing: she continues to be a blessing for all of us, through her total surrender to the word, her -YES-to God's plan for her. For Luke, *discipleship* consists in listening to God's word and then fulfilling it, and Mary does both, to become the most perfect disciple. That is why, soon after receiving the annunciation, she goes urgently to serve Elizabeth, her cousin in need.

Christmas is the ideal time for us to be filled with the spirit of Christ, allowing his rebirth within us. Once Christ is reborn in us, He enables us to share his love with all whom we encounter, by offering them humble service, unconditional forgiveness and compassionate care.

Friends, let us take some time to visit those in need during Christmas season, especially the sick and shut-ins, to bring some inspiration into their lives, and hopefully to bring some joy and get them closer to God. Mary wants *us to be a blessing*, she wants us *to become* a blessing. Like Mary, who brought Jesus Christ into this world, let us take Jesus to others. Like Mary, let us *be a blessing, blessing to each other, be a 'grace' to all!* Amen.

Fr. James, Pastor