



Fourth Sunday Advent 2006.

2 Samuel 7:1-17 Romans 16 : 25-27 Luke 1: 26-38

Today we have two stories which, when looked at together, give us some interesting insights.

In the first story the main characters are King David and the prophet Nathan and in the second story, Mary and the Angel. In the background are two children, Solomon and Jesus.

The subject is a dwelling for God.

After King David had established himself in his new palace, he thought he should build a house for the Ark of the Covenant. This was a portable shrine built as a sign of God's presence. Because the people had been nomadic, their shrine had to be able to be carried with them. Nathan, the prophet assured David that the Lord was with him in this project so he could go ahead with his plans.

That night Nathan had a dream. God spoke to him and said that, although David would contribute much to the people of God, and that God would always bless him, he was not to be the builder of the temple for the Ark.

The next morning Nathan had to go and break the news to David that it would not be David, but David's son who would build a house for God. David, although disappointed, responds with a wonderful prayer. We could call it David's Magnificat. (2 Sam. 7:22-29)

In Luke's story Mary, a simple village girl, receives a revelation from a messenger of God that invites her to be a mother. Her child will be Son of the Most High, he will inherit the throne of David his father. Mary is astonished and afraid. She is told that, as the Spirit hovered over the chaos and brought forth creation, so the Spirit would be responsible for this new creation.

Mary accepts her role in the work of God with humility. Later she will celebrate the goodness of God in her Magnificat.

David wanted to build a temple but he forgot to consider that his time might not be God's time.

Mary knew of the longings of her people for a saviour but she did not consider that a poor village girl might have a part to play.

David wanted to honour God through a beautiful physical creation. God wanted inner beauty and a faithful heart from the one called to care for God's people.

Mary struggled with the physical, social and emotional difficulties caused by her untimely pregnancy. In faith she accepted the difficult journey from the exile of suspicion to the restoration of love.

Both Mary and David, through their praying of the scriptures, gave glory to God as faithful children of Israel. The essence of both Magnificats is the same.

It is God who is great and worthy of all praise. Tradition teaches us to continually give thanks. God's holiness is manifest in magnificent saving deeds. Throughout history our forebears have seen awe-inspiring works.

God takes the conventional wisdom of humans and turns it upside down. Poor can be rich and rich can be poor. It is God who builds us a home and makes the divine home in us.

God's love endures from age to age.
Forever is truly a divine Word.

There is much we can reflect on from these great poems.
St Paul reminds us of this truth in the conclusion of the letter to the Romans. The Gospel reveals the message hidden for many ages but shown to us by prophets.
This message is now available to all.

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