

St. Barnabas Homily, 4th Sun Advent 12/20/2020 (LUKE 1:26-38) Yr B

THIS WEEKEND,,, WE CELEBRATE,,, THE 4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT AND WE PREPARE FOR THE COMING OF THE NATIVITY. TODAY,,, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT A VERY SPECIAL PERSON.

EVEN BEFORE THERE WAS,,, **THE BIRTH OF JESUS**,,, THERE WAS; **HIS BLESSED MOTHER MARY!**

MARY UNDOUBTEDLY PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN PREPARING JESUS FOR HIS MINISTRY. TODAY,,, WE WILL TAKE A LOOK AT THE EARLY PHASE OF THE BLESSED MOTHER'S LIFE AND THE CHARACTER THAT HELPED HER RAISE;

THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MAN,,, IN ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY!

SCRIPTURE SAYS; THAT IN THE SIXTH MONTH,,, THE **ANGEL GABRIEL**,,, WAS SENT TO A CITY IN GALILEE,,, CALLED **NAZARETH**,,, TO A VIRGIN,,, NAMED **MARY**,,, WHO WAS BETROTHED TO A MAN NAMED **JOSEPH**,,, WHO WAS A DESCENDENT OF DAVID.

WHEN THE ANGEL CAME TO MARY,,, HE SAID;

HAIL,,, FULL OF GRACE,,, THE LORD IS WITH YOU!

THIS WAS A UNIQUE GREETING,,, MEANT ONLY,,, FOR MARY! **NO SIMILAR GREETING IS FOUND ANYWHERE IN ALL OF SCRIPTURE!**

BECAUSE OF HER MODESTY,,, MARY WAS GREATLY TROUBLED BY THIS GREETING. SHE KEPT THINKING **ABOUT WHAT,,, THIS KIND OF GREETING MEANT!**

THE GREETING,,, **THE LORD IS WITH YOU**,,, WASN'T JUST MERELY A STATEMENT,,, THAT GOD WAS TO PAY A VISIT,,, BUT,,, **THAT HE WAS COMING DOWN FROM HEAVEN,,, BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,,, IN A MYSTERY,,, INTO HER,,, TO BE BORN.**

THE ANGEL GABRIEL SAID:

YOU ARE BLESSED AMONG WOMEN!

A NEW ERA OF SALVATION WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN,,, WITH THE CONCEPTION OF JESUS IN MARY.

JUST AS EVE CONTAINED WITHIN HER WOMB,,, ALL OF HUMANITY,,, THAT WAS DOOMED BY SIN,,, NOW,,, MARY CONTAINS WITHIN HER WOMB,,, (JESUS) THE SECOND ADAM,,, WHO WILL BRING ABOUT,,, NEW BIRTH,,, RECONCILIATION & REDEMPTION,,, BY HIS GRACE!

(ROMANS 5: 18 – 19 says).

JUST AS THE RESULT OF ONE TRESPASS,,, WAS CONDEMNATION FOR ALL MEN,,, SO ALSO; THE RESULT OF ONE ACT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,,, WAS JUSTIFICATION THAT BRINGS LIFE,,, FOR ALL MEN.

AND FOR JUST AS,,, THROUGH THE DISOBEDIENCE OF ONE MAN,,, THE MANY WERE MADE SINNERS,,, SO ALSO THROUGH THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE ONE MAN,,, (JESUS) THE MANY WILL BE MADE RIGHTEOUS.

THE ANGEL,,, KNOWING THAT THE BLESSED MOTHER WAS TROUBLED,,, SAID TO HER;

DO NOT BE AFRAID MARY,,,

FOR YOU HAVE FOUND FAVOR WITH GOD!

BEHOLD,,, YOU WILL CONCEIVE IN YOUR WOMB,,, AND BARE A SON,,, AND YOU WILL NAME HIM JESUS. HE WILL BE GREAT,,, AND WILL BE CALLED THE SON OF THE MOST HIGH AND THE LORD GOD,,, WILL GIVE HIM THE THRONE OF DAVID,,, HIS FATHER,,, AND HE WILL BE RULE OVER THE HOUSE OF JACOB,,, FOREVER AND OF HIS KINGDOM,,, THERE WILL BE NO END!

MARY SAID TO GABRIEL; “*HOW CAN THIS BE,,, SINCE I HAVE HAD NO RELATIONS WITH A MAN?*” AND THE ANGEL SAID TO HER; “*THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL COME UPON YOU,,, AND THE POWER OF THE MOST HIGH,,, WILL OVERSHADOW YOU. THEREFORE,,, THE CHILD BORN,,, WILL BE CALLED:*

HOLY,,, THE SON OF GOD!”

MARY SAID; “*BEHOLD,, I AM THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD! MAY IT BE DONE TO ME,, ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD*”.

ALTHOUGH MARY WAS PROBABLY BETWEEN 13 AND 15 YEARS OLD,,, SHE HAD AN SOLID DEVOTION TO GOD. SHE DIDN'T HESITATE,,, QUESTION,,, OR TURN FROM THE HUGE UNDERTAKING,,, THAT GOD HAD PLACED UPON HER.

NO,,, INSTEAD,,, MARY QUICKLY SAID:

BE IT DONE TO ME,,, ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD! THEN,,, THE ANGEL GABRIEL DEPARTED FROM HER.

NOW,,, THE UNBELIEVING WORLD MIGHT SAY; THAT:

(*) PERHAPS MARY ANSWERED QUICKLY BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND?

(*) PERHAPS SHE DIDN'T REALIZE,,, THAT THE WHISPERS AND STARES,,, WOULD FOLLOW HER,,, FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS!

(*) PERHAPS SHE ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE SO WILLINGLY,,, BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T KNOW,,, THE JEWISH LAW VERY WELL?

(*) PERHAPS MARY DIDN'T KNOW,,, THAT THIS VIRGIN BIRTH,,, WOULD EXPOSE HER,,, TO DIVORCE AND SHAME,,, BY JOSEPH.

(*) OR,,, PERHAPS,,,

MARY KNEW EXACTLY WHAT GOD WAS ASKING!

IT'S MY BELIEF,,, THAT THE BLESSED MOTHER,,, UNDERSTOOD,,,THE COST,,, AND,,,

SHE WAS WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE OF WHAT GOD WAS ASKING OF HER!

I THINK WE SHOULD TAKE NOTICE,,, OF HOW PATIENT THE ANGEL GABRIEL WAS WITH MARY.

AFTER MARY EXPRESSED HER QUESTIONS,,, HE GAVE HER A DETAILED EXPLANATION,,, OF HOW THIS MIRACLE WOULD TAKE PLACE.

MARY'S QUESTION WAS ANSWERED AND *ALTHOUGH SHE COULDN'T FULLY UNDERSTAND,,, SHE ACCEPTED HER SPECIAL ROLE,,, BY FAITH!* AND,,, THAT'S WHY GOD CHOSE MARY,,, BECAUSE GOD KNEW THAT MARY'S HEART,,, WAS COMPLETELY DEVOTED TO HIM,,, AND SHE WOULD BE COMPLETELY DEVOTED,,, TO THE DIFFICULT TASK,,, OF RAISING THE YOUNG MESSIAH!

BLESSED MARY,,, WAS A MOTHER OF GREAT DEVOTION!

ALTHOUGH MARY INITIALLY HAD A QUESTION,,, SHE LISTENED TO THE ANGEL,,, AND SHE FOLLOWED THE COMMAND OF GOD.

NOW DON'T WE ALL HAVE QUESTIONS AND DOUBTS,,, SOMETIME? CERTAINLY WE DO! BUT GOD ALREADY KNOWS THAT,,, AND YET,,, HE STILL LOVES US.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS,,, OCCURRED NEARLY 2,000 YEARS AGO,,, AND THIS MIRACLE,,, NOT ONLY TELLS US SOMETHING ABOUT THE POWER OF GOD,,, BUT ALSO,,, ABOUT THE VERY HEART OF GOD!

GOD THE FATHER,,, IS SO CONSUMED WITH HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH US,,, THAT HE CHOSE TO ENTER THIS WORLD,,, BY MEANS OF SENDING HIS SON,,, TO BE BORN IN A PLAIN STABLE,,, TO A PEASANT GIRL,,, WHO WAS A VIRGIN.

JUST AS THE SPIRIT CAME DOWN UPON MARY,,, TO BRING ABOUT CHRIST'S CONCEPTION,,, THE SPIRIT ALSO COMES DOWN ON THE BREAD AND WINE ON THIS ALTAR,,, TO CREATE THE MEAL,,, OF THE NEW COVENANT,,, WHICH CALLS US,,, TO PARTAKE OF CHRIST'S DIVINE NATURE,,,

BY RECEIVING,, **THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST,,**
INTO EACH OF OUR LIVES,, THROUGH THE HOLY
EUCCHARIST.

THE INCARNATION MIRACLE,, DEMONSTRATES THAT
OUR POWERFUL LORD,, IS SO CONCERNED ABOUT US,,
THAT HE WAS BORN,, SO THAT HE COULD DIE FOR
OUR SAKE!

LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY!

JESUS BECAME LIKE ONE OF US,,
SO WE CAN BECOME,, MORE LIKE HIM!

ALL THIS HAPPENED,, AS A RESULT OF A MIRACLE,,
ON A SMALL SIDE STREET,, IN THE SMALL TOWN OF
BETHLEHEM,, THROUGH ONE WOMAN'S FAITH AND
OBEDIENCE.

(*HEBREWS 11.1*) TELLS US THIS ABOUT FAITH;

“NOW FAITH,, IS BEING SURE OF WHAT WE HOPE
FOR,, AND CERTAIN OF WHAT WE DO NOT SEE”.

FAITH IS NOT NAIVELY TRUSTING IN THE
IMPOSSIBLE

IT'S WISELY TRUSTING IN THE INVISIBLE.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, GOD'S GIVEN US PLENTY
OF EVIDENCE SO WE CAN BELIEVE,, BUT,, **HE DIDN'T**
GIVE US INDISPUTABLE EVIDENCE,, BECAUSE,,

IF HE DID,, NO TRUE FAITH WOULD BE NEEDED!

BUT,, IT'S MORE THAN ENOUGH EVIDENCE,, TO
CONVINCE,, AND ENCOURAGE US,, TO BELIEVE THAT
THE SON OF GOD,, **JESUS CHRIST**,, CAME TO EARTH,,
AND WAS BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY,, **SO THAT HE**
COULD ULTIMATELY DIE,, IN ORDER TO RECONCILE
US,, TO THE FATHER,, AND SET US FREE FROM THE
POWER OF SIN AND DEATH.

EVEN THOUGH THE BLESSED MOTHER DIDN'T FULLY
UNDERSTAND,, MARY WAS WILLING TO OBEY

THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY GABRIEL.
SHE BELIEVED GOD HIMSELF WOULD ACCOMPLISH
THE WORK WITHIN HER,, THAT HE GAVE HER TO DO.
MARY CONSIDERED HER PERSONAL SITUATION,, (*AS
DIFFICULT AS IT WAS*),,, *AS NOTHING*,,, COMPARED TO
THE *WORD OF GOD*,,, AS *EVERYTHING!*

EVEN TODAY,, GOD THE FATHER,, STILL SENDS
MESSAGES MEANT FOR OUR EARS ALONE. THESE
ARE MESSAGES,, THAT CAN BE BOTH DISTURBING,,
YET WONDERFUL,, AT THE SAME TIME.

GOD STILL SPEAKS,, BY THAT SAME SMALL VOICE,,
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,, TO GUIDE AND DIRECT US,, AT
SURPRISING,, AND OFTEN UNEXPECTED TIMES,, SO
THAT HE CAN ACCOMPLISH HIS WORK,, IN THIS
WORLD AND HIS GUIDANCE,, CAN SUDDENLY TURN
OUR LIVES,, COMPLETELY UPSIDE DOWN!

JUST LIKE THE BLESSED MOTHER,, WE TOO CAN GET
A LITTLE “*CAUGHT OFF GUARD*” AT FIRST.

WE GET STUNNED WITH WHAT WE HEAR,, BEFORE
GRATTITUDE CAN SETTLE INTO OUR HEARTS,, AND
WE OBEY THE SPIRITS LEADING.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, *WHAT MAY APPEAR RIGHT
NOW,, TO BE,, OR,, TO HAVE BEEN,, THE WORST
THING THAT COULD HAVE EVER HAPPENED IN YOUR
LIFE,, BECAUSE OF GOD’S PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE,,
COULD TURN OUT TO BE,, THE GREATEST BLESSING,,
THAT YOU HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED!*

WHEN YOU GET A MOMENT. TAKE A BRIEF SECOND
AND REFLECT BACK OVER YOUR LIFE AND SEE
WHERE THE LORD’S HAND HAS BEEN UPON YOU.

*THE BLESSED MOTHER,, OBEYED THE WORD OF GOD
AND SHE ACCEPTED GOD’S BLESSINGS.*

THROUGH HER DEVOTION AND FAITH,,

**SHE GAVE BIRTH TO THE SAVIOR.
AND THEN... SHE WATCHED WITH PATIENCE,,,
AS JESUS FINISHED HIS WORK,,, ON THE CROSS.**

NOW,,, THAT IS A LIVING FAITH!

**MY BELOVED,,, *IN ORDER FOR US,,, TO BE ABLE TO
EXPERIENCE GOD'S BLESSINGS,,, WE,,, JUST LIKE THE
BLESSED MOTHER MARY,,,* MUST ALSO STEP OUT IN
OUR FAITH,,, AND PLACE OUR TRUST IN GOD THE
FATHER,,, AND IN HIS SON,,, *OUR LORD AND SAVIOR,,,
JESUS CHRIST,,, WHO DIED,,, WAS RESURRECTED AND
ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN,,, IN GLORY,,, TO SIT AT THE
RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER.***

AND,,, JESUS DID IT,,, FOR YOU AND FOR ME!

**I BLESS YOU ALL,,,
IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,,,
AND OF THE SON,,,
AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT,,,**

AMEN