

Letting God Dwell in Our Hearts & Our Homes Fr. Leo

Brothers and sisters in this fourth Sunday of advent, we come very close to gaining an understanding of what we've been preparing for. God wants to make a home in us, through the mystery of the incarnation. To help us with these readings, we pray the collect, the prayers for this fourth Sunday of advent.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Pour forth, we beseech You O Lord, thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an Angel, may by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Here we are so close to being able to open up our gifts, but the real gift is wrapped in swaddling clothes. So, we just need to make sure that we are teaching our children what this is really about. And just a little hint, if kids are more enamored with St. Nicholas, then tell them about St. Nicholas. If they're more interested in, for example, the gifts themselves, make sure that you're also wrapping up some religious gifts and making sure they are learning how to give spiritual gifts to their family and friends, even if they just write a prayer, and why? Because our faith is not supposed to be something that's out here. It's supposed to be something that we can touch, taste and see. It is not supposed to be a theory, but it's supposed to become incarnate in the flesh. We're supposed to be able to see that gift, touch it and hopefully incarnate it. And that's one of the reasons why this first reading coming from the book of Samuel talks about a tangibility of God, a tangibility of God.

Listen, "When the King David was settled in his place and the Lord given him rest from his enemies, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am living in a house of Cedar. While the Ark of God dwells in a tent?" Nathan answered the King, 'Go do whatever you have in mind for the Lord is with you.' But that night, the Lord spoke to Nathan and said, 'Go and tell My servant David, that thus says the Lord, 'Should you build me a house to dwell in?'" I mean this is the same God who created this whole thing for us. God doesn't want to dwell in a house made of human hands. God wants to dwell in our hearts, which are made by His hands.

So, this tangibility of faith is what we're talking about. And you're going to hear how one of the things that God wants to do for his faithful people is not only dwelled with them, but to give them a longevity and a prosperity, because let's be honest with you, you can build your house, but if it's not going to be something that you can give to your children and their children's children, then what are we doing here? Because one of the things we want to do is create a stability, a tangible sign of faith, which is represented as our homes. Let's admit it, our homes also known as the domestic church is in a way an expression of our faith. That's why when I do a lot of home blessings, house blessings, I always remind people that the house is supposed to symbolize three things.

It's supposed to symbolize our church, our church, because what we do in church is what we should be doing in our homes, that's why we call it the domestic church. The second thing that the house represents is our souls. So, if our souls are cluttered, if our souls are messed up, then

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it's going to show up on the outside as well. So, if our hearts are pure, then our homes should be dwelling places. If we are willing to welcome Jesus into our soul, then we're going to be willing to welcome even strangers and people who need love, God's love in our homes. The third thing that the home represents, is it represents heaven.

And so, if you want to get to God's heavenly home, then we got to start practicing our faith in our homes. And that's what the prophet Nathan is trying to say to King David. You can build me an Ark, I mean you could build me like a house of Cedar or a tent or whatever you want to build me, and I don't want to live there, I want to live in you. And therefore, when we do guess what's going to happen, we are going to once again, reprise in a way this joy of God with Psalm 89, "Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord," because if God is truly dwelling in us, there's going to be a sense of stability and longevity. God doesn't just bless us once. God wants to bless us in perpetuity.

And so, guess what your home's become also a school where you can teach your children the faith, and therefore they will learn how to teach their children, the faith and so on and so forth. And guess what? We make a home for God in our family. And that's why the Psalm 89 talks about how, "My kindness is established forever. In heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness. I have made a covenant to My chosen one. I have sworn to David, My servant. Forever I will confirm your posterity and establish your throne for all generations." Again, make a home in your heart and your soul in your life, in your own home for God. And He gives us the stability. You experience the tangibility of faith, and also hopefully the longevity that God will bless you all the days of your life.

And this is something that Saint Paul of course wanted to talk about to the people of Rome. Remember these people of Rome, boy they were pagans. They made a lot of statues to the different god, and they even in a sense worshiped the emperor. But Saint Paul knew that these things were just symbols, and the fact is they were statues, they weren't even alive. But what does Saint Paul tell the people of Rome? "To Him who can strengthen you, I proclaimed Jesus Christ. According to the revelation of the mystery kept secrets from long ages but now manifested through the prophetic writings. According to the command of the eternal God, made known to all the nations to bring about the obedience of faith to only wise God through Jesus Christ, be glory forever and ever. Amen."

Saint Paul is telling people that, "I get it, you don't really know the true God. So you make it up as you go along. But I'm here to proclaim something to you, that all of these gods actually speak to the true God." In fact, later on in the Acts of the Apostles, post-resurrection, because we can't dismiss that time of our life as well. Saint Paul is going to say, "I've noticed that you even have a tomb or a tabernacle or an altar built to the unknown God." You see the Romans were very religious people. They were just worshiping the wrong god, and that's one of the reasons why their lives were so messed up.

They were trying to recreate heaven on earth in their homes, their domiciles. Saint Paul is saying, "No, no, no, you're getting it all wrong. If you really want to experience God, then you're going to have to know who these ancient teachings and writings we're talking about." They're talking about the incarnate God, the incarnate God, the God who is going to come in the flesh, not as a

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statue, but as a child. And this child will eventually change bread and wine to His very presence, and when we receive that Eucharist, then God makes literally a dwelling place in us and we listen to moms and mother church who tell us, that we are what we eat. We become literally Tabernacles for the God who doesn't remain a theory, but truly wants to be tangible and make His home in us.

And this is so clear in the gospel where we actually hear the annunciation account and boy it's really powerful. If you go to Jerusalem with me on a pilgrimage, I'm going to take you to Nazareth. And I'm going to take you to what is known as the grotto, the cave, where it says on a little mark on the floor. "This is where the word became flesh and dwelt among us." And so we hear this account from the gospel of Luke, how the angel Arch angel Gabriel comes to greet Mary, calling her in Greek Kecharitomene hail full of grace, which basically means if she is so filled with grace, there is no room for sin because that's how God made her, preserving her from the stain of sin, so that she as the new Eve will be able to give birth to Jesus, who is the new Adam. And it says here, "Behold you will leave in your womb and bear a Son and you shall name Him Jesus, and He will be great. And will be called Son of the Most High." And that longevity promise it will be His forever.

And how is this going to happen? The Holy Spirit will overshadow you, and the Holy Spirit's overshadowing when I studied Mariology this one line about how the Holy spirit will overshadow you, was very similar to the expression use when the cloud came over the mountain where Moses would climb and eventually walk down with the 10 commandments. From that moment, the clouds overshadowing the mountain, Mary becomes that same image and guess what? The law of God won't be written on stone anymore, it will be literally prescribed in a beating heart, the heart of her Son, Jesus Christ, who is going to make a home, not just in her but make a home for Mary.

And I always tell people if they ever doubt the mystery of the assumption of Mary into heaven, the fourth glorious mystery, I don't know why people would doubt that has Mary made a home for Jesus in her physical home, but more importantly in her human being, in her very humanity made a home for God, what do you think Jesus is going to do? Not pay the favor back? No, as Mary gave life to Jesus on earth, and made a home for Him in her heart, Jesus will certainly make a home for her in heaven and receive her in Himself in this eternal dwelling that we call heaven.

And that's why on this fourth Sunday of advent, we're really asked to make a home for God, make a home for Jesus. And the best way to do that is with a purity, get rid of the things and the sins that clutter our lives, because that is not what's going to give us longevity in faith, but put your hope in Jesus Christ and trust that if we're willing to be like Mary and say, "Behold, I'm the handmaid of the Lord, behold, I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done according to Your will." Then the reign of God will enter into you, and you will see how you are supposed to inherit the kingdom of heaven. And why? Because for those who are at home with Jesus on this earth will feel very comfortable when He welcomes us home in heaven.

Don't leave God out there as a theory, let God become incarnate in you. You become what you eat. God became man, the Holy teachers will tell us, especially Saint Thomas and Saint

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Augustine. God became man to dwell with us so that man can become more like God and dwell with Jesus. We hope that this helps you in your advent spiritual pilgrimage. And if you want to learn more about everything that we do with my organization, just visit me at platinggrace.com. Trust in my prayers for you, please say a prayer for me.

Thank you for being a part of this advent mission, and let us give glory to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning as now, and ever shall be a world without end. Amen. May almighty God bless and protect us and bring us to everlasting life. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen. Go in peace.