

## READINGS AND REFLECTION FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

### A READING FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL 7:1-5; 8-12; 14, 16

Once (King) David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.'

That very night, the word of the Lord came to Nathan: 'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pastures, from following the sheep, to lead my people Israel. I have been with you on all your expeditions. I have cut off all your enemies. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel. They shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again. The wicked will not oppress them as they did when I appointed judges over my people. I will give them rest from all their enemies.

The Lord will make you great. The Lord will make you a House. When your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and secure his sovereignty. I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."

**The Word of the Lord.**

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 88: 2-5,27,29

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord. Through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth. I am sure, that your love lasts for ever, that your truth is firmly established as the heavens.  
**FOREVER I WILL SING THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD.**

'I have made a covenant with my chosen one. I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages.  
**FOREVER I WILL SING THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD.**

He will say to me, 'You are my father, my God the rock who saves me.'  
I will keep my love for him always; for him my covenant shall endure.  
**FOREVER I WILL SING THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD.**

### A READING FROM THE LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE ROMANS 16:25-27

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear, that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

**The Word of the Lord.**

*I am the servant of the Lord: may his will for me be done.*

**A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE 1:26-38**

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.'

She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean. The angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. He will rule over the House of Jacob for ever. His reign will not end.'

Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you,' the angel answered, 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. The child will be holy and called Son of God.'

Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, conceived a son. She whom people called barren is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible to God.'

'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary, 'let what you have said be done to me.'  
And the angel left her.

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

Taken from THE JERUSALEM BIBLE, published and copyright 1966, 1967 and 1968

**REFLECTION ON KEEPING CHRISTMAS**

Keeping Christmas could be more significant than things we may do on Christmas Day. What could we do to keep Christmas – even for a day?

- To forget what we have done for other people and to remember what other people have done for us;
- To realise that people who are disadvantaged are just as real as we are and to try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy;
- To remember the weakness and loneliness of people growing old;
- To hold off condemning young people, some of whom have not had the life experience, and opportunities, security and guidance some of us have had;
- To try to understand what people we live with really want, without waiting for them to tell us.
- To live confidently in practical ways our belief that love is the strongest thing in the world - stronger than hate, evil and even death;
- to pray for all to grow in and live the unconditional love of God which Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, revealed – Eternal Love.

Let begin again each day in our resolve to keep Christmas.

Its love, faith and joy calls out to be shared; it can never be kept to ourselves.

From Henry van Dyke