

Covenant Life

- We had our Community Gathering last Sunday and the audio can be heard by clicking [here](#). When preparation is complete the summary and the transcript will be loaded [here](#).
- We have completed our 2021 Promise Drive but we will leave the link [here](#) for those who have not yet had a chance to respond. We want to hear from everyone, not just for financial planning, but so you can recommit to your covenant.
- Please donate online [here](#) or mail your donations to P.O. Box 225008 Dallas, Tx 75222. Please note that donations must be in our possession by 12/31/20 to be counted as a 2020 donation, else they will count as a 2021 donation.

Reflection - The Catholic readings today are familiar passages but as I was listening to the first reading, I was struck by the interchange between King David and Nathan the prophet. When King David declares his intention to build a house for God, Nathan quickly responds with a naturally human perspective "*Go, do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you.*" However, Nathan did not leave it there, likely during his evening prayer he heard God reveal to him a divine response. Nathan went back to David with the prophesy that he had received announcing that God was going to do His work through David and his Yes to following God's will.

The first thought that came to me was a similar revelation to St. Francis in the San Damiano church when Francis prayed asking for direction for his life. He heard the words "Rebuild My Church". In both instances David and Francis had naturally human responses of physically building a place for God. But as we know God's ways are not our ways and His purposes are so far above. In both instances God was wanting to build His Kingdom on earth through their Yes, through their willingness to seek God, struggle to understand His divine will, and say Yes to it. Neither of these men had an easy life but God was able to fulfill His promise to Abraham through David's line in Jesus. God was able to rebuild His church in Francis' day again through St. Francis' life and testimony.

Knowing that the Church purposely discerns the first reading to connect the old and new testament and connect the messages, we can take this connection one step further. The annunciation story in the Gospel is another divine revelation, this time to our virgin mother Mary, proclaiming God's divine will, which, similar to the stories above, did not make sense based on human perspective and wisdom. What the Church is trying to shine a light on for us is Mary's response, like King David and countless saints who have gone before us, our need, not to understand, but to say Yes.

This has been such a hard year. No one could have imagined a near shut down of our world. The virus has touched every person to varying degrees and so many have had to retreat to private spaces. We are all troubled. And yet, God is speaking to each one of us these words, *"Do not be troubled. My ways are not your ways. I am about a work that you cannot understand. All that I ask is that you say Yes."*

If we think back and hypothetically wonder what David would have felt had God revealed to him the impact of his Yes and the same for Mary, St. Francis, and so many other saints. What joy they would have had at knowing the impact of their Yes. Sisters and Brothers, the same is true for us! We will not know the results of our Yes. It is God's plan that we each embrace His will, that we surrender to Him and strive our entire lives to constantly live in His perfect will. Doing this should give us a deep abiding Joy. Not that our days will be easy, not that we will not suffer pain and rejection and loss just as those who have gone before us but, if we trust, if we love, if we persist in hope, then we will have deep abiding joy within that will sustain us and animate our days.

Last week we heard Isaiah's prophesy of a year of favor from the Lord. I do not know what 2021 holds but I will join you in praying that we claim this prophesy for our time. But, regardless, we do not need a happy world to have inner joy. *We rejoice in our Lord, our spirits rejoice in God our savior, and we see the great things that God has done for us!* This is cause for our inner joy and our reason to *Rejoice in the Lord always!*

My final thought is to bring this back to our covenant. Nathan heard God because that evening he was *open* to hearing what God wanted to say through him. Nathan had the *courage* to go to King David and proclaim the prophesy. King David had *surrounded himself with holy women and men* and had the *courage to listen to their wise counsel*. Mary never strayed from *purity* and had the confidence to say *Yes* to God's will without counting the cost. St. Francis *gave up everything* and asked God to reveal His plan for his life. He then surrounded himself with holy men and women and set himself to *build community and serve the poor* and in doing so *rebuild the church* of his day.

Sisters and brothers, this too is exactly what we are called to in our day, living our covenant. God wants us open to hearing His word through His divine revelation in our prayer time and through one another. God wants us in relationship with other holy women and men so we can see beyond the human responses and understand His will. God wants us in community so that we can build something that will last in caring for the poor and rebuilding His church in our day. Let us say *Yes*.

Let us pray together: *"Heavenly Father, I ask your forgiveness for the times I see life through my human perspective and have not been attentive Your plan and revelation. I surrender to You. I commit to being open to Your revelation and to the wise counsel of my covenant sisters and brothers. I commit to acting with courage in responding to Your will to build community, serve the poor, and rebuild Your church. I thank You today and every day for calling me into relationship with You and my covenant sisters and brothers. Amen."*

God bless,
David