**4th Sunday of Advent, Cycle B**

December 23/24, 2017

2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Rom 16: 25-27; Lk 1: 26-38

Where will you find God this Christmas? Where do you look for the love and presence of God?

Many people nowadays say, “I find God in nature and in creation.” It is true, all of creation reflects the beauty of the One who created it, but remains only a veiled hint of God. It is not God. To try to find God in nature is like looking for Leonardo daVinci in his painting of the Mona Lisa. The painting is beautiful and intriguing, but it is not Leonardo. And so it is with creation; it is beautiful and intriguing, but it isn’t God who created it.

In the Old Testament, there were many spectacular events in nature that revealed a little bit about God and his relationship with his people. You can recall the great flood during Noah’s time, or the Red Sea dividing in two and the pillar of fire that lead the Israelites safely through the desert, or the burning bush that spoke to Moses on Mount Horeb. People back then wanted and needed natural signs that somehow would make manifest God’s supernatural presence, who he was and what he wanted to reveal to them. Yet, all these signs in nature were but a “veil”, you might say, that offered an obscured view of God. People were afraid to see God clearly, we are told in the Old Testament.

But then, God the Father did something only he could do. He chose something unimaginable, almost incredible. He said, “I will reveal myself in a much clearer way. I will completely say to my people all that I desire to say to them until they get to heaven. I will send my divine Son who will take on their human nature. He will reveal to them the fullness of my revelation. He will tell them everything they need to know. In him, they will see clearly who I am.”

Indeed, St. Paul tells us in our second reading that the “revelation of the mystery was kept secret for long ages” but is now manifest in the birth of Jesus, the Son of God.

Yes, it is in the birth of Jesus that we find God. It is Jesus we must come to know. It is Jesus who gives meaning and purpose to our lives. It is in Jesus that we find life, happiness, and peace. It is Jesus that reveals to us the fullness of God, who God is. We no longer must depend on creation to try to find God. We have Jesus, born into the world as the divine person who embraced our human nature.

Our faith, hope and love are rooted in Jesus. Jesus is the light that makes all things clear. Without Jesus, we are in darkness. Jesus penetrates the night and illuminates our lives. We can see all things clearly if we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Have you ever woken up before dawn and stood in your dark house? It’s dark. If you really strain your eyes you might make out a few larger pieces of furniture. The closer sunrise gets, the more light enters your house. The more light that comes, the clearer everything becomes, even the small things. When the full brightness of the sun shines into your house, you can even see the specks of dust that float in the air.

This is what happens at Christmas, if we look for the Christ child. This is how it is when Jesus comes into the world. The more we know him, recognize him, and let him shine into our live, the clearer everything becomes, even the small things, the mysterious things.

In a few short hours, we will celebrate Christmas, the birth of Jesus, the coming of the greatest light ever to shine in the world, the great revelation of God made man, the mystery that was hidden for many generations and foretold by the prophets, but now made know to us. If we search for anyone else, anything else, we will at best get only a veiled hint of God; at worst, we will become lost and confused.

Where will you find Jesus? Look for him in the Church. Jesus promised he would never abandon his Catholic Church. It is in the Church that Jesus comes into our lives over and over again at the Eucharist. The fullness of truth, the heart of Christ, the brightest of all lights in the world, the Real Presence of Jesus body and blood, is in every Catholic parish. Seek him there. Know him at the altar. Hear him in the Gospel. Recognize him in the gathering of the people.

Remember, Mary bore God in her womb. She is the Mother of God. The Church bears God in her womb and gives God to the world as Mary did. The Church gives life to the world because she bears witness to the Incarnation, the birth of Jesus Christ, and all he did for us in his life, death, and resurrection.

In a few hours we will gather again to remember the Christ child. We will come to adore the child of Bethlehem, the King of Kings and the Lord of lords.