

Advent 4 December 2014 Year B

One thing that really leapt out at me when reading through these readings was that God said “And have I not been with you wherever you went?” That is so reassuring, and so at odds with what David was offering God, a solid building to contain him, when really he wants to dwell in us and for us to realise that he is there.

David loved God, but he had also gone astray but now, looking back over the distance he has travelled, he has safety and security and wants to give God the same. God, of course, doesn't need to be contained, however much we may want to, he wants us to let him be as big and as powerful as he can be, which of course is beyond our imagining.

And this is what we celebrate at Christmas, an act so unimaginably great in all of its aspects. God wants to make this world a home for us, work started at creation, and now God is going to leave heaven and come and live among us, so that we will know how to see him and what his love is like.

To achieve this he uses a young girl, not rich or famous or an intellectual. Instead a young girl who acts obediently, despite the problems it will cause her in her community and with her proposed marriage. She trusts and believes when she hears God is in charge of all the problems.

This is difficult. We all have problems, hopefully we pray about them, but does this stop us worrying? Do we hand over our worries to God and then let him deal with them? Do we listen and watch for any help he might give us? Mary was sent to see Elizabeth, the one person who would have some understanding of the events.

The next challenge, after learning to trust God is to let him work as he wants to in our lives, to let him be as big and as powerful as he wants to be. He can do great and amazing things with us if we let him. Fr John Woolley writes “ You have found that there is a great gulf between expressions of trust (and even those genuine feelings of trust) and launching out in trust.” Thankfully our God is full of mercy and only wants us to try.

Our God is mysterious as we are unable to comprehend or put into words the mysteries, the miracles and the power that he has. Paul says that the mystery of God was hidden long ago, presumably when we sent from his company in

the garden of Eden. Here in these readings we hear the scriptures come true in a way never imagined, God at last found the house, neither tent nor temple, but flesh and blood, that would most truly express his royal, self-giving, love.

When David offers to make a home for God, God explains that his home has always been with his people. He has gone with them, preparing things for them, making provision for them in ways that they had never noticed. He knows they long for a home, but they don't realise that they can't have a home without him. All that we long for, all that we search for; love, peace, security, fulfilment, joy, can't be found in material things, or even in other people, but only in God, our only real home.

So now God is preparing, as Advent moves towards Christmas, to come to us, in our own place. He will make it, and us, his home, so that we can come to our true home at last. Secure in the knowledge that whatever we have done or not done, he loves us, and as long as we have taken the first step, he will go with us always and everywhere.