

## Fourth Sunday of Advent † Sunday 20 December 2020



Cycle of Prayer: Openness to the word of God and Prayer for Expectant Mothers  
Keynote: People of God called to greatness by the Lord

### Second Book of Samuel 7: 1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

The writings of the prophet Samuel tell how David, after many dangerous exploits, emerges as the great royal king and leader of Israel and there is an era of peace. Samuel records David's humble pastoral background, in the words of the Lord God, *'I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel... I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth... and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me... for ever.'* So the boy David called from the fields became a great warrior king, and leader of Israel. Truly called to greatness by God – for even thousands of years later who has not heard of David and his deeds? We too, are called to greatness – that is our Christian vocation.

**Responsorial Psalm 88 (89)** – A song of joy and trust in the Lord

### Letter of Paul to the Romans 16: 25-27

Some scholars question whether this text was originally part of Paul's letter, as it seems to have elements that indicate that it is a liturgical hymn used in the early Christian church community. *'Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach,'* says the apostle, *'I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery... that must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith.'* This vast missionary task is Paul's vocation and our own too. To share the Gospel – the Good News – offering freedom and salvation – that is what we are about, both as Church and as individuals. It is our call to greatness – *'Give glory to God through Jesus Christ for ever and ever.'*

### Gospel according to Luke 1: 26-38

In his account of the call to greatness of this young Jewish woman, Luke recalls for us the greeting of God's messenger, who says to Mary, *'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.'* We are told that Mary was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself, what this greeting might mean.

In our liturgy today, the faithful are also addressed by the words: *"The Lord Be With You."* We, like Mary before us, might be a bit more 'disturbed' and ask ourselves what that greeting might mean for us too. If we were to follow the example of Mary, we might respond in humility and with faith, *'I am the handmaid (servant) of the Lord.'*

We recognise that Mary was being called to greatness – to bear the divine child. Thus she would be known as *Theotokos* – Bearer of God. In our final preparations for the Christmas festival it may be time for us to recognise our own call to greatness and to holiness, and to consider how best to respond in our own lives in the days to come. So, in the words of the heavenly messenger, may *"The Lord Be With You – Dominus vobiscum!"*

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NOTE: Christmas – Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord – Friday, 25 December 2020