



Daily Reflections



Week beginning Sunday 23 December
(4th Sunday of Advent Year C)

To

Monday 24 December 2018

Sunday 23 December—Fourth Sunday of Advent

Scripture: Micah 5: 1-4; Psalm 79(80); Hebrews 10: 5-10; Luke 1: 39-44

*But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.*

...

*And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth.*

God often uses the least likely things to bring about his promises. Today it is a small town in Judah—one overshadowed by the great, sacred city of Jerusalem just a few miles away—the “Little Town of Bethlehem”. If the one who would rule Israel were to come forth, it would be so much more likely to be from Jerusalem. If someone were to come and stand in the strength and majesty of the Lord—it would surely be from Jerusalem. And yet, it is little Bethlehem from which the one who will bring security and hope to the ends of the earth comes.

- Why do you think God chose Bethlehem rather than Jerusalem where his Temple was?
- What does God’s preference for the unpredictable and unexpected teach you about where he might work in your own life?

In every nativity play all around the world, children learn the name of a town where world-changing events took place. Yet, it is a town that is itself struggling with security—and with hope. Pray today for this town where the Christian story was born—and for its people who hold its sacred places in trust for future generations.

Monday 24 December

Scripture: 2 Samuel 7: 1-5, 8-12, 14, 16; Psalm 88(89), Luke 1: 67-79

The word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.

This seems a strange choice of reading for Christmas Eve! David is at the height of his powers and well-settled in his palace—admittedly of cedar but suitable for a king. He has decided that he will build a house for the Ark of the Covenant—in effect, for God. God points out that it was he himself who took David from the pastures and gave him the successes that have led to his living in this house. He then begins a conversation that we gradually realise is a play on words. When God is talking about a house, he is not just talking about a dwelling place. He is also referring to a royal house—that someone belongs to rather than somewhere to live. It is this house that has the greater significance looking ahead to the feast tomorrow. For Joseph was in the house of David—and so was the child he was committed to protecting—Jesus.

- Why do you think God seemed to take umbrage at David’s declaration about building him a house?
- How does the reading help to set the scene for the birth of Jesus into the House—if not the palace—of David?

Reflect today on how the Old Testament scriptures help to deepen our understanding of the New—giving us glimpses of the world into which Jesus was born—and of the many generations during which God was preparing the world for his coming.