

On this final Sunday of Advent, we are reminded of two of God's favorite people and pillars of our faith, King David and the Blessed Mother. As we prepare for the light of the world to come on Christmas day, let's take a look at how God lights the way in their lives.

In the first reading David has defeated his enemies and created a palace of cedar for himself and his family. He suddenly realizes, that while he lives in luxury, God is confined to a tent rather than a temple. As David prepares to build a house for God, God enlightens David by pointing out that David himself is a temple. God, in fact, has been living in his heart and working with him to build His Kingdom. In God's gratitude, he promises to make a house for David in heaven. This is why we call the Church the people of God, not the building where we gather. We are each a temple, enlightened by the same Holy Spirit.

A few hundred years later, God reaches out to Mary to become a temple of God, but this time in a very physical sense. The Angel Gabriel tells her, "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus." We are told, "She was greatly troubled by what was said." Yet the angel lights the way for her with these reassuring words, "the Father has found favor in you" and "You are full of grace." This is all she needs to accept God's will in her life. All of Mary's grace is realized when she surrenders to God, making the light of Christ and Christmas possible.

How do we follow the example of David and Mary as we encounter the light of Christ this Christmas? In his encyclical, "The Light of Faith," Pope Francis describes the great gift of light brought by Jesus. He says, " The light of faith is unique since it is capable of illuminating every aspect of human existence. Faith, received from God as a supernatural gift, becomes a light for our way, guiding our journey through time." In other words, like David and Mary, we can face any situation in life through the light of our faith in God.

Pope Francis goes on to say, "Transformed by this love, we gain fresh vision, new eyes to see, and a vision of the future opens up before us." As we turn the corner on a new year, let's ask for new eyes, to see our lives in a new light through the gift of our faith.

God's light has played a significant role in my personal life this year. Around the time Covid hit, the small company I worked for laid off half of their staff and I was hit with finding work in a difficult economy. I had three months remaining in my studies to become a deacon and I felt like this was my final exam. For four years I was given all the tools of prayer and knowledge of God, and now I was called to put my faith to work.

This is when I really learned to pray. Prayer was the one activity that calmed my mind and heart and allowed me to do the work of finding work. God's grace enlightened me through helpful people like a retired CEO who runs a free unemployment group out of the Cavalry Church in Carlsbad. This and many other blessings gave me a sense of peace and made it possible for me to do MY part and let God do the rest. I landed a job two months ago, and I praise the Lord for my new position. I'm also thankful for this experience that's given me new eyes to see the reality of unemployment, and new ways to pay forward all the blessings I've received from those who've helped me along the way.

Sometimes our hardest times reap our greatest blessings. As we celebrate the birth of our savior this week, let's learn from David and Mary to open our hearts as temple of Christ. Let's surrender all our circumstances in life to the Lord, the highs and the lows. And let's let the light of our faith give us new eyes, to see our world in new ways and listen for God's call to build His kingdom.