

Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 24, 2017



by Julie Penndorf



The readings for this last Sunday of Advent focus on how God has chosen us all to be part of a chosen people, regardless of who we are or what we have done.

In the first reading, we are told how God chose David to be the leader of God's people – David, who had been a sinner in every sense, a sinner who had gone so far to murder the husband of the woman he lusted after. And yet, Nathan is told to tell David “I have been with you wherever you went, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. And I will make you famous like the great ones of the earth (2 SM 8).” God saw goodness in David, even though he was a sinner, and God blessed David greatly.

In the Gospel, we hear the story of Mary being chosen to be the mother of God. Mary, a young, pure woman, was chosen as the vessel through which God would become flesh. She is nearly the opposite of David.

The distance between David and Mary – his sinfulness, his pride, her simplicity, her holiness – are the spectrum across which all people fit. God's love is so great, God can choose a poor, uneducated young person, or an older, arrogant, adulterous murderer, and enable them both to serve God for the greatest good. And nearly all of us fall somewhere between these two. God was able to take David's sinfulness, guide him to reconciliation, and lead him to be a great leader of Israel for 40 years. God was able to take a simple, uneducated, small town young woman, and form her into being both God's greatest servant and most important human to exist.

So where can God lead each of us, whether we are more like Mary, or more like David? God has a great plan for each of us, and God's love and mercy can enable those plans to happen. But in order for these plans to happen, in order for all of us in between David and Mary to serve the Lord, we must be given the chance, and we must be allowed repentance when necessary.

The work of the Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN) is precisely where God has put people in charge of this task. David is proof that no person is ever the worst thing that they've done, and CMN works to enable those who are on death row to be given the chance at repentance. Mary is proof that our God can enable anything to happen for those who trust. We never know who the next David or Mary will be.

Julie Penndorf is the Director of Campus Ministry at DeMatha Catholic High School, where she has been for the past seventeen years. She lives in Washington, DC with her husband and children and is an active member of St. Peter's Parish. She has been passionate about ending the use of the death penalty since hearing Helen Prejean speak at Boston College in 2001.

