

Are You Amazed?

December 21

Hear in kindness, O Lord
The prayers of your people
That those who rejoice
At the coming of your Only Begotten Son in our flesh
May, when at last he comes in glory,
Gain the reward of eternal life.
Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Read Luke 1: 39-45

When was the last time that you were amazed by this? Have we forgotten how it is – we should be amazed by what God has done! Maybe it is time for us to recover a sense of wonder, awe, and amazement. Are we like the old world; do we expect God to show up with indescribable and unapproachable and inconceivable majesty? Throughout all of history, God has impressed Himself upon us in very, very small ways.

Today's first reading; the wonderful Christmas prophecy about the descendant of David: Jesus, who would rule forever. David was settled in his palace; the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies on every side. There is this brief summary of the last twenty-one years of David's life, and during those years, David had lived like a renegade to avoid being murdered by his predecessor, Saul. Then he fought a civil war against Saul's followers, and then another ongoing war against the foreign power, the Philistines. And although he was usually outnumbered and under equipped, God always gave him the victory.

Perhaps, David's most famous victory was the first one – remember that story? The Israelites were at war with the Philistines. The Philistines had this gigantic warrior by the name of Goliath. Goliath had challenged Israel to let the war be decided by one combat of himself and Israel's greatest soldier. The war was at a standstill; they had fought for days with no movement on either side. So, let us decide it now; bring your greatest soldier and we will fight it out. So what did the Israelites proffer? They sent forth a teenager, a little kid – a shepherd boy. He said to Goliath, "You come against me with sword and spear, but I come against you in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel that you have insulted." And sure enough – you know the story – David took his little slingshot and with one volley, embedded a stone in the forehead of the giant, who fell over dead. God: inconceivable, indescribable, living in unapproachable light, and yet, His greatest victories are very small indeed.

So, there is this young woman in a far off place. Not in the centers of power, certainly not in Rome. Insignificant, unknown; who knew her? She was not known by anybody outside her village, but this is where God visited. She recognized the words, "Do not be afraid" – this is what God had said to Abraham, to Joshua, to Daniel. She had heard the echo throughout the centuries: God was building a house. She did not realize it was going to be her. When we think of God building His own house, that God said to David, "I will build a house," we are thinking of a huge temple even bigger than St. Peter's; we are thinking of grandeur. But this is where God came – Mary.

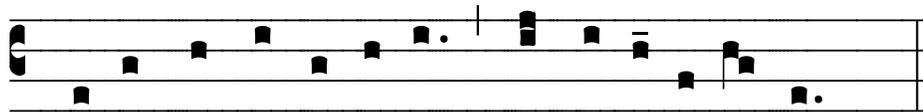
You and I are asked to imitate Mary. Each one of us must be that spiritual house. There has to be times every day when we close the doors of that house and leave out the world and all its distractions. Look inside that house and see. Has it been filled

with all sorts of garbage from the world? Have you forgotten to be amazed that God wants to dwell in you? This is where each and every one of us offer worship and spiritual sacrifices. This is how each of us carry Christ into the world. The world, you know, already rejects everything that we say about the dignity of the human person. But you and I know, that He alone is our salvation and He has come to save us. And, with Mary and all the saints, we will build ourselves into a house of God: chosen.

You know what all the world is amazed by; you know that grand concerts and wonderful conquests in the field of battle – all designed to amaze us. Go on YouTube and look at it; it is all there. But God wants to be small for us. He wants to come to us in such a small and insignificant way that, if we are not paying attention, we are going to miss it. Remember, in Bethlehem, everybody was going about their business. They had no idea that a little child born and placed in a manger, would be the Savior of the world, would free us from our sins, would bring us light and life, and beauty and truth. We had no idea. When you come into this church and chat with your neighbor and greet one another with jovial kindness and bright faces, do we forget in Whose presence we are? Are we no longer amazed that we are in the throne room of the King? Do we fail to pay attention to Him, to His presence? The world tries to distract us, but He waits. He waits for us to turn to Him. He has become very small; we might miss it. He takes hold of the smallest piece of bread in the house and even the smallest crumb, becomes God: indescribable, unapproachable, inconceivable; living in unapproachable light. We would be destroyed by it, if we saw it all. Instead, He wishes to hide Himself in the womb of a virgin, in a tiny infant, in a condemned criminal, in a tiny piece of bread. He wishes to hide Himself so that we would not be afraid. Come to Him. Close the door on the world, let the distractions fall away. This is a time to come to Him.

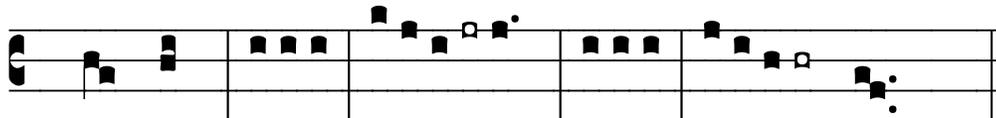
Psalm 33: 2-3, 11-12, 20, 21

VII a



Ex-ult, you just, in the Lord! Sing to him a new song.

VII a



Give thanks / to the/ **Lord** *on the* harp; * and all his/ **works** are trust(wor)thy.

--He loves/**justice** and right; * of the kindness of the/ **LORD** the earth (is) full.

See, the/ eyes of the LORD are upon/**those** who fear him,* upon those
who hope/

for his kind-ness,

--To de/**li**-ver them (from) death * and preserve them in/**spite** of fa-
mine.

Our soul /--/waits for the LORD, * who is our/ **help** and our shield.

--May your kindness, O LORD,/ **be** up-on us * who have/**put** our hope
(in) you.

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