

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

DO YOU SEE MARY?

“Where does God live?” This simple question, often asked by the youngest among us, is deceptively profound. Some might answer “God lives in heaven” or “God lives in the church building,” but the readings for today offer a more nuanced answer to this simple question.

King David, out of all love and piety to God, decides to show his devotion by building God a house. David was troubled that the Arc of the Covenant, God’s selected seat, was still housed in a nomadic tent while David was living in a permanent wood home. God, however, is unconcerned about accommodations. In a word to the prophet Nathan, God reminds David that it was through divine power that David was placed on the throne, triumphed over enemies and will be the father to kings. God affirms that he will dwell where he likes among the people and cannot be conscripted or confined.

The first part of the answer to the question, “Where does God live?” is, not in any single place that we decide.

The gospel for today gives us the second half of the question. In the Annunciation to Mary, that she will bear the Son of God and that his name is to be “God with us,” the angel Gabriel says, God lives with you; God lives within you. So too for all of us. God does not dwell in a place, but in and with people and creation.



When taken seriously, this affirmation is as awesome and terrifying to us as it was to Mary. Perhaps this is why the angel said, “Do not be afraid.” Do not be afraid to bear God in you. Do not be afraid to bring God into the world or to let God make a home with you. So too for us. We must not fear God’s dwelling place within us; within the temples of our hearts. We are called to repeat Mary’s fiat, her answer of “yes, let it be done to me.” Yes, let my heart become the dwelling place of God. Yes, let me be the one to bear God’s presence to a world in need.

In a year when churches have been closed and community has looked different, the miracle of the Incarnation is here to remind us that God lives where we are. God has made a dwelling with and in us. How will you take time in these last days of Advent to make space in the room of your heart to welcome God there again? How will you witness to God who is in the world among us, even now?