

## Gospel Reflection

There is a teaching from the rabbis that “When Israel wanders, God stays with them; when Israel stays in one place, God wanders.” Of course God never left the chosen people; this is the rabbis’ way of saying that human beings can get too grounded in earthly things and dwelling places. Our hearts get crowded, there is no room, and so God must wander. The people of ancient Israel were for much of their history a nomadic, wandering, tribal people. Their time in the desert and their years of exile in Babylon were the high points of their religious formation. Many feared that if a mortal ascended the throne of Israel as king, then God would be dethroned as the true king of Israel. Likewise they feared that if God had a permanent dwelling or temple, then they would no longer know the *shekinah* of God, their term for God pitching a tent in their midst, joining them as a companion in their journey. These fears underlie the voice of the prophet Nathan in today’s first reading.

On Christmas morning, we hear John’s Gospel account of the incarnation: “And the Word became Flesh, and came to dwell among us” (John 1:14). John uses the Greek version of *shekinah* to emphasize that Jesus, God among us, pitched his tent on earth to be our companion on our journey. For much of his earthly ministry, Jesus was an itinerant preacher, a nomad. While most of us live in permanent places and are not called to this kind of mobility, we would do well to ask if there is still a place in our hearts for Jesus to pitch his tent. As we have surely heard and read over the past several weeks, we ought to “keep Christ in Christmas.” This is a lesson for all seasons today, a lesson that Israel struggled to learn, a lesson that our own Church has struggled with as it assumed the trappings of earthly status. We need to make sure that when God-in-Flesh comes knocking at our door, we can respond that there is plenty of room within.

## KEEPING FAITH FIRST FAMILY FUN

*Luke 1:26-38*

F H S H W S N X S E F C O  
D J E O R Z R I E U M N F  
R M R L N W V Y L M D H C  
T D O Y I P X L Q I I F G  
G E R S B Z O H S I A W M  
B A V P T F A N U I M H E  
M B B I G H Q B S L D U P  
O L I R E F I A E J N K S  
W L A I I C S G J T A X X  
G C I T D E N E H R H R M  
E B H B Z A L O R D C A U  
J O E X I V Z Y C E U B A  
H O K D N K P U E X A V O

**Find these words from the Gospel passage.**

ANGEL	WOMB	ELIZABETH
WORD	GABRIEL	HANDMAID
HAIL	JESUS	HOLY SPIRIT
LORD	MARY	MOST HIGH
SON	CONCEIVE	FULL OF GRACE

## Disciple’s Reflection & Questions of the Week

*The Fourth Sunday of Advent  
12/21/2008*

*Luke 1:26-38  
Faith-Sharing  
Questions of the Week*



***Our Lady of the Assumption***

435 Berkeley Ave.  
Claremont, CA  
[www.olaclaremont.org](http://www.olaclaremont.org)

## Call to Prayer

*We begin by calling upon God:*

**In the Name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the  
Holy Spirit, Amen.**

*We then pause for a moment to listen with  
our hearts to this week's Gospel passage...*

**The Word of God:** *Luke 1:26-38*

### ***The Gospel according to Luke***

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, full of grace! The lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called **Son of the Most High**, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a

man?" And the angel said in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of **the Most High** will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called **barren**; for nothing will be impossible for God."

Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

### ***The Gospel of the Lord***



### **Gospel Glossary**

**Son of the Most High:** as distinct from John the Baptist, who is referred to in Luke as the prophet of the Most High

**the Most High:** This title for God occurs throughout the Gospel of Luke.

**Barren:** physically unable to have children

## Faith Sharing

### **Questions of the Week**

- When have I experienced God acting in my life?
- When have I, like Mary, borne the Word of God for others?
- How can I be like Mary in saying to God "May it be done to me according to your word?"
- When have I seen proof that "nothing will be impossible for God?"

## Closing Prayer

Father, all-powerful God,

Your eternal Word took flesh on earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory, and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**The Fourth Sunday of Advent**