

New House on the Block

*A Missionary Commentary on the
Sunday Readings*

Sunday Readings

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29
Rom 16:25-27
Lk 1:26-38

[USCCB link to the Sunday Readings](#)

When two of our missionary priests decided to build a house, and asked a local carpenter to help them, they chose an area of land in El Arenal, the “Sandpit”, in the western part of the capital city of Chile, Santiago.

The idea was to live among people in a non-evangelized area and establishing a “friendly presence”—dressing and speaking as they did, shopping at the same places, preparing the same food, and becoming a member of the same local organizations, including a soccer club.

Out of curiosity, conversations took place, and a desire to find out more about these neighbors blossomed into a series of prepared talks and conversational meetings about the shared problems and life experiences of the neighborhood, in the light of Gospel values and a faith perspective.

A Christian community formed, and a chapel where their faith could be expressed and nourished sacramentally was built years later, by the people themselves.

“What kind of house could you build for me?”, God asks David, in the first reading. Did I not find you outdoors, in the open air, with the stars for your roof, shepherd-boy, hero of the people, king of all Israel? Let’s look, instead, at the house I am going to build you, a “house” that includes Solomon, and all of your future descendants, the House of David.

God the architect revealed his blueprints to the human family over nearly a thousand years, satisfying the curiosity of many, clearing up the mystery, and finally inviting Mary to collaborate with the project, where the Incarnate Word will soon pitch his tent, in the middle of a rough-and-tumble neighborhood in much need of the Good News—the neighborhood where the human family dwells, in the garden of the cosmos, in growing harmony with our natural home and its Builder’s blueprints.

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Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

This text combines different tendencies among ancient sources, and reveals the hand of both the “J” perspective, suspicious of plans to build a temple, a royal residence, and thereby losing the simple, nomadic roots of Israel, as well as the hand of “D” editors, who bring in a pro-Solomon, and pro-Temple note. Most importantly, however, is the promise of an everlasting kingdom of a descendant of David, a Messiah, “Christ” in Greek, the Anointed One.

Psalm

The psalmist reminds us to "sing the goodness of the Lord" forever.

Second Reading

Although experts agree that this doxology may have been added to Paul’s letter to the Romans in the second century C.E./A.D. by a later admirer, it’s a good summary of the inspired work, where “gospel” and “obedience of faith” are prominent elsewhere.

Gospel

Following on the story about Zechariah (Lk 1:5-25), there is a contrast made in the angel’s statement in each case. John will be great (Lk 1:15), but Jesus will be great and Son of the Most High (Lk 1:32), for example. Also, while Zechariah demanded proof, Mary simply asks about the obvious roadblock—her virginity, and responds with the same powerful expression of faith that her son will use in the garden before his death (Lk 22:42), “Let it happen to me as you have said.”

*Notes and commentary by Fr. Bob Mosher,
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