

As we contemplate the whole of Scripture, and especially the Old Testament, we can note that God takes a particular action with the people several times. An action that brings out the fullness of what we celebrate at this time, this incarnation of the Son of God.

God from the very beginning tells all of the creatures to be fruitful and multiply, and that includes humanity. "Give birth!" God says, not only because it is part of the nature of life, but also it is an act of trust in the future and God's providence.

We hopefully know the story of Genesis, Adam and Eve, and their choices; not only what we think we know, but know the bigger story. God remained faithful to Adam and Eve, despite what had happened. God never abandoned them. Through this presence, through this faithfulness the people, humanity finds life!

The Old Testament is the story of God's faithfulness to Humanity. God will demonstrate that through the birth of children, bringing life to a nation, bringing life to families. God tells Abraham and Sarah to trust that they will be the parents of a great nation, even in their old age. Through much trial, tribulation and a little humor, it all happens.

Couples desiring a child, but unable to conceive; they turn to God and God hears them, and a child will be conceived, who makes changes for the people; helps them to thrive: Samson, Samuel among them.

Then God hears Elizabeth and Zechariah. They too are without a child and in their old age, yet a son will be born to them, whom we know as John the Baptist.

Finally, though not seeking a child, but nonetheless open to trust in God Mary conceives through the Holy Spirit; the Son of God is born; Joseph, trusting in God's love, adopts him as his own.

Jesus is THE sign of God's faithfulness to all of humanity. The sign that God never abandons us; despite our sinfulness, despite our mistakes, despite our weakness; God is with us.

Here we are at the end of 2024. Seemingly so chaotic, so dark and scary. We have a political change going on in this country; with all its possible effects on us. We have the continuing violence in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan; so many innocents being killed in the name of protecting a country, a supposed way of life. We have a climate in flux upsetting what we consider our normal patterns; floods, droughts, huge storms.

And locally, I know there are people here who have recently lost loved ones; those facing serious illnesses; those worried about their immigration status; relationships struggling... people facing truly difficult choices in their lives.

This past year, I know of many families that have endured heartbreak; that have hurt them so much.

God remains faithful to us.

That faithfulness is to inspire us. God's faithfulness to us is meant to inspire us to trust and to act, to live and find life. God's faithfulness moves us to take action.

Jesus has shown us the way. He, the very embodiment of God's love, loved as well; healing, forgiving, welcoming, being generous, giving of himself all the way to death. Throughout it all, he trusted in God's love and manifested that Love in each action he took.

We too are called to live this way. Trust in God's presence; have the courage to love, have the courage to forgive and be kind; have the courage to be generous and give; have the courage to accept a short term hardship for a long term life.

I know it is not always easy. Yet, with that trust, with that acceptance that God remains with us, we can endure, and not just endure, but be resilient.

As many families have endured heartbreak, as many families have begun to thrive and offer life. There are several families here that have opened their homes to children, to foster and adopt; to offer them an opportunity to thrive.

There are men and women who have found the grace, the courage to turn away from their addictions, to find a cleaner life.

There are many women and men in this parish who give of their resources, including their time, so that others can have good decent food, shelter; who can escape a life of captivity.

Nobody knows what 2025 will be like; or even what the rest of this week will be.

We trust though, as Catholics, sacramentally made present in our Eucharist, that God remains faithful to us. Calling out to us to live life well.