

**Sunday
(8:30 AM Mass)**

God has a housing crisis! We have a housing problem as well. A huge housing problem right here. We are always looking for home. No matter where it is or what it is. Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home. Home is where the heart is. My old Kentucky home. Even ET wanted to go home. And when we're playing baseball, the very best place to get is 'home'. Why? Why is this housing so very important?

Because it is the one place where we belong. Somebody once said home is the place where when you go they got to take you in there. Well, it's even more than that. It's a place where you're secure, you have your identity, you know who you are, you are warm. The great saying in Spanish, when somebody wants you to be welcome is *es su casa* or this is your home.

But today there is a terrible housing crisis. There are many many homeless. One of the wonderful organizations that we've seen in the last 20 years is a group called PADS. Public Action to Deliver Shelter. There are many of you right here in this congregation who have worked the PADS programs for the homeless. There's that great book of mercy that says, 'I was homeless and you took me in.' We do ours at St. Alexis in Bensenville. And I want to make sure that we've got enough people to do that because it's such a service for the homeless.

Well, today, we've got a homeless God. David, at the end of his reign looks back and he sees he is the king of Israel. He has built himself a house, a mansion And he's starting to feel a little bit guilty because he knows that God is in a tent. And God is moving around in this little Arc of the Covent in a tent and he's saying, this isn't fair. 'Why should I be in a mansion with my God in a tent'? I will build him a temple, a great house. And so he told that to Nathan. And Nathan goes to God, and God says, 'Not a good idea'.

God comes back and he plays the Italian and says, 'What you? You're going to build a house for ME? Oh no you're not You're not going to build a house for me. All of this is my house. I am the God of the universe. You know what I'm going to do for you, David? I'm going to build a house of for you. I'm going to give a dwelling place for you that is so secure, your identity so ingrained, you have such a sense of who you are that this house will stand so firm that it will last forever. It will be yours forever. It will be a kingdom without end, David. It's your house. It's my promise. And the day will come when there will be an ancestor born to you who will be the king of this household. And he will proclaim his kingdom and this house.

In scripture that's called the 'great reversal'. We think we're going one way and all of a sudden we realize we're going in the exact opposite direction. That's the way God always seems to work. It's always very paradoxical. We think we're going in this direction, doing this thing, and then all of a sudden no, God's doing something else. So, we think we're going to do God a favor and he's saying, 'No, I want to do you a favor'. But, he's just reversing right away again. Because if God's going to come down and be born here, he needs a place to go. He needs a place to dwell.

So you fast forward 2,000 after David into a little village in Nazareth and a little virgin, named Mary, who promised to stay empty all of her life waiting for God, who promised her virginity to the Lord. And all of a sudden God is looking for a home. He's looking for a place to dwell. He is now the homeless one. He needs a place to be incarnated. But he can't come to a place that this filled. He can only come to an empty space.

Let me say something about God. One of the boldest things we can possibly say about God. And we never hear the two words together because all we ever hear is about God the All Powerful, God the Almighty, God the Creator of the Universe, God the Humble. .the Humble. God is the ultimate humility

because God is Love. And love never coerces. And love never forces and love never pushes. Love simply offers and offers and gives and forgives. That's the nature of love.

God is love. God is humble. So God isn't going to force himself into our house. But, he's going to ask permission. So he sends his angel forth to ask permission, 'Can I come into your house? Am I welcome there?' And the angel appears to this little virgin and says, 'Hail Mary full of grace'. And she's troubled by this. She doesn't know what this really means. Any time we are confronted by that kind of power, that kind of love, that kind of overwhelming we are troubled. And the angel goes on to say, 'You have found favor with God. And now you shall bear a child.'

And now she's really (inaudible). She just made a promise of virginity. She just made a promise that she would remain empty. So she says to the angel, 'I don't know how this can be I have had no relationship with a man. The man I am betrothed to I do not have relationships.' And the angel says, 'Here's how it's going to happen. There's an emptiness in you. A void in you that God will fill. And it is by the Power of the Holy Spirit that he is going to come down upon you and you are now going to God in your house, in your womb. You're going to be the Mother of God. And, behold, this child who is about to be born from you is the One of the House of David that was promised. He shall be called the Son of the God Most High and His house will endure forever. His kingdom will be without end'.

Now, the most important words ever spoken by a human being. The homeless God is looking for a home. And this little 14-year-old girl, unlettered looks at this angel and looks at her womb and realizes there is room inside. So she says the most unbelievable, remarkable words ever uttered by a human being — 'Let it be' 'Let it be done unto me according to your word' Now there is room for God to be born.

The most incredible thing in the world that has ever happened is that the Almighty, the Powerful God humbled himself to become one of us. To be born one of us. To be born of this virgin. God became a man — no he didn't.

I want to fast forward 2,000 years to our own housing crisis that we are experiencing right here, right now. Oh, we are experiencing a physical, economic housing crisis. You know that. The sad thing is there's no shortage of houses. We can't afford the mortgages. We can't afford to live in. It's too expensive. Well, that's not the housing crisis I'm speaking of. The housing crisis that God is experiencing right now is the housing in here... in

here. See, God did not become a man... Monsignor put it this way, and St. Paul understood it very clearly — God became man. God did not just become Jesus 2,000 years ago. Jesus was the fullness of God. By nature, one with God. But, because of what he did, he has now opened the rest of humanity to make room for God to dwell in them, in us That's what the incarnation is all about.

There are 150, 300 Gods right in this congregation, right now. If there's no housing crisis. If we can make room for him. Because he's looking for a home. And the last time he came to be born there was no room for him in the Inn. He couldn't come to the regular place to be born so he had to be born in a manger. And he's knocking at our door again. It's Christmas time. Its time for him to be born again. It's time for him to become incarnate again. And he's knocking on the door saying, 'Is there room? Is there room?' But he's not going to push us.

And, like the virgin, we too are overwhelmed when we come to the realization that the angels are asking the same thing of you and of me that the asked of Mary — Are you going to allow it? Are you going to give him permission? Because he's not going to go where he's not invited. God is that humble.

What will keep us from inviting him in? Two things, one, we're overwhelmed by that love. That kind of love. That kind of unconditional love. That kind of ever-forgiving love. That kind of love that doesn't judge. It's almost too much for us. It's too big for us. It's going to change us in too many ways. We're not sure about that We are frightened. And the other reason it's very difficult to let him in is because there's no room. There's no room in the inn. I'm already filled with my own worries. I have problems of my own. I got problems with the kids and the in-laws and the economy and my job. I'm worried to death about what I'm going to do. I'm all overwhelmed with my concerns and my cares and my angers and my bitterness and my judgment. I am just filled. And he can't come into a filled room.

That's why we're here right now — to empty out. We are running around trying to fill ourselves with Christmas spirit that doesn't exist out there. What we're called to do more than anything else is to make room. To empty ourselves. To quiet ourselves. To sit still. Because Emmanuel is still coming. Emmanuel wants to come home. It is our holy work. It is our invitation that He gives us. Our response to say the same thing to Jesus that Mary said 2,000 years ago. And when He does that, we'll all be home for Christmas.