

ADVENT SEASON TO ME IS ABOUT ULTIMATE HOPE. GROWING UP IN BROOKLYN IN 1987, MY BROTHERS AND I HOPED FOR THREE THINGS FOR CHRISTMAS: SNOW, A NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM, AND MIKE TYSON'S PUNCH OUT. WE ESPECIALLY WANTED THE NINTENDO SYSTEM AND MIKE TYSON'S PUNCH OUT. I REMEMBER GOING TO THE LOCAL ELECTRONIC STORE AND JUST STARED AT WHAT I HOPED WILL BE UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREE. I KIND OF FELT LIKE RALPHIE FROM A CHRISTMAS STORY AND THE NES AND MIKE TYSON'S PUNCH OUT WAS MY RED RYDER BB GUN. WELL, JUST LIKE MEATLOAF'S SONG "TWO OUT OF THREE AIN'T BAD". IT DIDN'T SNOW THAT YEAR, BUT WE DID GET A NINTENDO SYSTEM AND MIKE TYSON'S PUNCH OUT. THIS YEAR, THERE WERE TWO THINGS THAT I HOPED WOULD HAPPEN IN THE LGBT COMMUNITY AND IN MY OWN LIFE. I HOPED THAT MARRIAGE EQUALITY WOULD PASS IN NEW YORK, AND IT DID. I HOPED THAT I WOULD BE ACCEPTED TO MONROE COLLEGE, AND I WAS.

TONIGHT'S READINGS FOCUES ON HOPE. IN SECOND SAMUEL IT TALKS ABOUT HOW ISREAL'S MESSIANIC HOPE CENTERED ON DAVID. NOW DAVID REMINDS ME OF GEORGE WASHINGTON. WHAT I MEAN ABOUT THAT IS JUST LIKE GEORGE WASHINGTON, DAVID

DEFEATED HIS ENEMIES, MERGED ALL THE TRIBES OF ISREAL INTO ONE, AND MADE JERUSALEM ISREAL'S CAPITAL. SO RIGHT NOW THIS SHEPARD HAS DONE GOOD FOR HIMSELF BUT HE WANTED MORE. HE WANTED TO BUILD A TEMPLE FOR GOD IN THE NEWLY MINTED CAPITAL OF JERUSALEM. WHAT DID GOD SAID ABOUT ALL THIS? THROUGH THE PROPHET NATHANIEL HE SAID, "THANKS, BUT NO THANKS". NOT ONLY DID GOD SAID NO TO DAVID BUILDING HIM A TEMPLE, HE TURNS AROUND AND TAKES ALL THE CREDIT FOR DAVID'S VICTORY. CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT? IT'S LIKE IF YOU WERE RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT AND YOU WIN THE PRESIDENCY, BUT YOU'RE SPEECHWRITER TAKES ALL THE CREDIT. IN THE READING GOD SAID "I TOOK YOU FROM PASTURE, FROM FOLLOWING THE SHEEP, TO BE PRINCE OVER MY PEOPLE ISREAL: AND I HAVE BEEN WITH YOU WHEREEVER YOU WANT, AND HAVE CUT OFF ALL YOUR ENEMIES FROM BEFORE YOU." NOW GOD DOES SOMETHING REALLY AWESOME, HE TELLS DAVID INSTEAD YOU BUILDING ME A HOUSE, I'M GOING TO BUILD YOU A HOUSE FOR YOU FROM WHICH A LINE SHALL ENDURE FOREVER.

THERE IS A LINE IN TONIGHT'S GOSPEL THAT HOLDS TRUE TODAY. **NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD. NADA ES IMPOSIBLE**

**CON DIOS.** IF YOU PUT YOUR MIND TO IT AND HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF AND GOD, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE. I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS HOMELESS BACK IN JANUARY OF 1996. AT THE TIME, I WAS ALSO TRYING TO GET MY GED. INSTEAD OF GIVING UP, I MADE UP MY MIND AND DECIDED THAT NO MATTER WHAT NOTHING WAS GOING TO STOP ME FROM GETTING MY GED. ALTHOUGH IT TOOK ME THREE TESTS TO TAKE, I FINALLY GOT MY GED IN JUNE 1996 WHILE STILL LIVING IN COVENANT HOUSE. A YEAR AND FOUR MONTH AFTER I BECAME HOMELESS, I FINALLY FOUND HOUSING. AS YOU CAN SEE, IT HAS NOT BEEN EASY FOR ME, AND IF IT WAS THEN EVERYBODY AND THEIR MOTHERS WOULD BE DOING IT. WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS THAT NO MATTER HOW HARD THE SITUATION IS, IF YOU PUT YOUR MIND TO IT AND HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF AND GOD, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE.

NOW HOW DOES MY STORY RELATE TO TONIGHT'S GOSPEL? WELL LET'S LOOK AT MARY. SHE IS 12 OR 13 AND ENGAGED TO JOSEPH A CARPENTER. THIS WOULD MAKE A GOOD TOPIC FOR JERRY SPRINGER: I'M A TEENAGE BRIDE TO BE, NEXT ON SPRINGER. ANYWAY, SHE WAS GETTING READY TO GET MARRIED WHEN THE ANGEL GABRIEL WAS SENT BY GOD TO GALILEE TO SEE MARY. NOW

MARY IS CONFUSED. TO HERSELF SHE SAID, “WHY IS THIS ANGEL HERE?” THE ANGEL SAID “DO NOT BE AFRAID, FOR YOU HAVE FOUND FAVOUR WITH GOD. AND NOW, YOU WILL CONCEIVE IN YOUR WOMB AND BEAR A SON. AND YOU WILL NAME HIM JESUS” BASICALLY GABRIEL TOLD HER YOU’RE IT. YOU’RE THE ONE THAT WILL GIVE BIRTH TO JESUS. AND WHEN MARY GIVES BIRTH, THE CHILD WILL BE BOTH HUMAN AND SPIRIT. NOW MARY IS WONDERING HOW THIS COULD BE. HOW COULD SHE BE PREGNANT IF SHE’S STILL A VIRGIN? AND WHAT GABRIEL TELLS HER TIES THIS TOGETHER, “NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD”. SO DESPITE THE HARDSHIPS THAT IS GOING TO COME AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF WHAT IS ASKED OF HER, MARY SAYS YES.

AS I SAID IN THE BEGINNING OF THE HOMILY, THIS ADVENT SEASON TO ME IS ABOUT HOPE. AS WE LOOK BACK ON 2011, THANKS TO THE GREAT WORK BY MARRIAGE EQUALITY, WHAT WE HOPED AND PRAYED FOR BECAME REALITY WHEN NEW YORK PASSED THE MARRIAGE EQUALITY BILL. AS WEEK LOOK FORWARD TO 2012 AND OUR 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, LET US HOPE THAT OUR DIGNITY COMMUNITY REMAINS A PLACE WHERE GAYS, LESBIANS, BISEXUALS, TRANSGENDERS, AND STRAIGHT CATHOLICS COULD

COME AND CELEBRATE MASS TOGETHER. LET US HOPE THAT OUR  
YOUNG ADULTS CONTINUE TO BE THE FUTURE OF OUR DIGNITY  
COMMUNITY, AND FINALLY LET US HOPE THAT THE GOALS AND  
DREAMS THAT WE SET FORTH WILL BE FULLFILLED. AFTER ALL,  
NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOD. AMEN.