

Lorna Wood

We gather to honor Lorna on the day that the Catholic Church observes the solemnity of the Annunciation. Exactly nine months before Christmas Day, we remember the day when the Word became flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary because she agreed to do the will of God. The story is well known: God entered the human world within a poor family. God chose a woman from an insignificant town to provide a home for the Savior of the World. The child was born under exceptionally difficult circumstances in which the parents lacked any comforts of home.

The celebration inspires us by joining two different themes. One is Mary's decision to do God's will, whatever it was, no matter the inconvenience, in total trust that everything would turn out just fine. The other is God's desire to reassure humanity that in spite of any concerns, doubts, or fears, God is always our companion. The name of the child from an earlier prophecy carried the appropriate message: Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." God was no more profoundly with us than in the incarnation of Jesus in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Today we bring Lorna to this church in order to reflect on the same two messages. One is the importance of doing God's will, whatever it may be, no matter the circumstances of life. Lorna lived without the comforts of family in a home that lacked many benefits that others take for granted. But she connected with people who cared for her, and she inspired them with her wisdom and charity. The other message is that God is with us. We do not always open our eyes to see the presence of God in the simplest of situations. But when we do, we gain a deeper insight into the mystery of human life. When we come across those who lack many basic resources, we can still say, "Here, even here, God is with us." Even in circumstances that the world may consider needy or empty, God is already present with the fullness of grace.

I want to commend the members of A Simple House for the witness you bear. You minister to those who seem to have less, but who actually have everything: they have the fullness of God's grace by virtue of their human dignity.

As we celebrate these twin festivals, the faithful life of Lorna Wood and the annunciation of our Lord, let us recommit ourselves to doing the will of God. When we allow God to direct our lives, we will discover in many varied ways that even where we least expect to find it, God is with us.

Saturday, March 25, 2017