



DECEMBER 21, 2014

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



2 SAMUEL 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16

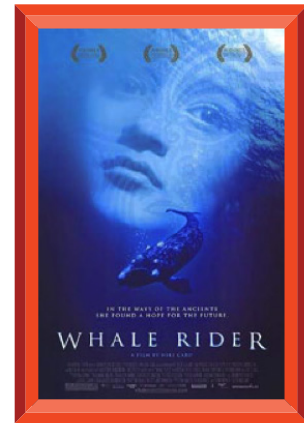
PSALM 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29

ROMANS 16:25-27

LUKE 1:26-38

REFLECTION

Have you ever felt like someone's "favored one"? What do you suppose that feels like? Maybe you know. After a great retreat or a good performance or game, after doing good sometimes or even in the midst of a difficult situation or tragedy, people experience moments of grace that help them get through. I wonder if Mary experienced this the night the angel Gabriel came to visit. The angel tells her that she is God's "favored one" (Luke 1:28). I wonder what she felt because right after that he tells her not to be afraid. When something big is in front of us, good or bad, it's hard *not* to be afraid. But today's readings tell us that God is faithful. He keeps his promises. God promised a Messiah to David and in the Gospel today he comes through. The angel tells Mary "The Lord is with you." That's a message for us too. The next time you're facing something big—good or bad—remember Mary and her courage, remember that the Lord is with you.



In the movie *Whale Rider*, a young girl must become a leader against incredible odds. Her journey is like Mary's. She must face criticism from those closest to her to do what she is called to do.

ACTION

Christmas is so close now we can almost taste it. We've been getting ready for weeks and now Advent, our time of waiting and hoping, gives way to the wonder and awe of Jesus coming into our hearts and lives. Let today be a day of listening—to the people that you love, family and friends, even to the wider world, which tends to be a little more hopeful than usual this week. Most of all listen to God's message of love for you.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- What is the thing in your life that does or would take the most courage?
- Write about a time when you felt full of grace.