

This week I had a meeting early in the week, and when I started it off I said this is a great time because it's the fourth week of Advent, the week of love. About half the group rolled their eyes at me, and I said we're going to go and we're going to say what we love. I'm going to ask all of you right now just like I asked them, as opposed to them I'm not going to make all of you say it, but them I did. And I started with aside from my friends and family. I would say what I love is being back here. I love being back in Madrid. I love being at St Paul's, and I love the work that I get to help and do in the community. And each person said something they loved and what I heard in each one of their voices, I heard hope, I heard peace, I heard joy, and I heard love. They all talked about different things.

They talked about snow, they talked about memories, they talked about things that filled their hearts. And this year that's very hard to do. We see so much going on around us that is negative. We see so much war, we see so much hate, we see so much anger that it's hard to remember those good things. It's hard to find the happiness this season more so than others. And that gives me pause because I love this time of year. These people are there for each other. They celebrate the joys and the concerns and even though a big part of it is commercialized, we still spend a lot of time showing each other how we love them, showing each other the joy that we feel that they are a part of our lives, showing each other the peace that we have and contentment in those quiet times. When we can just sit. We don't have to talk, we don't have to do anything, we can just be.

Those are all wonderful wonderful things this week. I got to see things that I haven't seen much of the past month. On Wednesday Greater Love, we got to be a part of something wonderful. Friends and family came in and they just celebrated being together. They talked about the anticipation of this week and what they get to do together. We saw people coming in and giving much more than most could probably handle, but they wanted to make sure that their love for this community went out to the people who need it the most. It was wonderful. Unfortunately the night ended very soberly. Dot had come in, and as she left she had a heart attack. And so all of us at Greater Love did everything we could to help her. And it was hard, but it was wonderful because not only was it the people who are nurses, the people who tried to offer prayer, but it was other people in the apartments that came out to make sure that the EMS got there, made sure that there are spots cleared off in the parking so they could get the ambulances in. It wasn't just a couple of people. And the best part is that there were not any rubberneckers. You didn't see any people trying to sneak in between their blinds to see. Legitimately, everybody was trying to help, and they didn't know her. They didn't know who it was even. But they found out later they did know her. It didn't matter. That love that God puts in us was expressed at that time when it was most needed. A time that easily could have gone the other way.

But we have that love put in us. God put that in us. He put that love in us the second that he sent Gabrielle to talk to Mary. Mary gave her consent to being the one. She gave her consent to knowing that things were going to be hard for her and her family by giving her consent that her son was the son of God. She said we can do this. We can do this together because we have so much love and faith in God. And because of that present, she gave each and every one of us love, hope, joy, and peace beyond what we can ever comprehend. We have a wonderful strength in that gift, knowing that it is beyond words, knowing that we share it with each other, and that is a beautiful, beautiful thing that we get to do at this time of year.

Our Earthly worries, our Earthly concerns, are not relevant because God has a much bigger plan. In Isaiah, God tells us that our time is not his time, our way is not his way, and so when things like Wednesday happened, we don't understand why it happened then. But we can take comfort in knowing that it's part of his plan. We can take comfort in knowing that there's a purpose, whether we know it or not, whether we expect it or not. It's an underlined part within our hearts that was put there by this gift they were anticipating. Put there through the birth of his son, put there through the sacrifices that Jesus and also the sacrifices that Mary and Joseph made. And it's a sacrifice that we make each and every day while being part of this wonderful family.