

4th Sunday in Advent (B) 12/21/2014

WALL-E is a delightful movie about a robot whose only job is to compact and stack the discarded waste of humans. Somehow – as often happens in Walt Disney movies – **WALL-E** evolves and develops many human traits. The most important trait is his openness to love... which always is inclusive of others.

A less important, but none-the-less human trait is his tendency to tease. **WALL-E** – in one scene – understands that another robot can't tolerate anything being out-of-order (any *contaminant*). So, he purposely creates disorder (he makes smudges on the floor).

We also tend to **crave order**. It might not be – and most often isn't – the **order** of someone else, but our **order** helps us to make sense out of life. That's a good thing... until it isn't. Then, our need for **order** demands that we make sense out of something **out-of-order**, and when we can't, we become fearful and angry, and then **project** our fear and anger onto someone else.

Both our first reading from **II Samuel** and our gospel story from **Luke** provide us with moments in which the human need for **order** is undermined by something **out-of-order**. As king, **David**, naturally thinks that it falls to him to build a **temple**, not only to do homage to **God**, but also to **solidify** his authority. As a woman who is betrothed, **Mary** accepts that it is her station in life to become **pregnant**, but only **after** she is married... which is understood as the **proper order**.

Neither **David** nor **Mary** is prepared for the **disorder** that happens. Both view the

disorder as **chaos**... as something that isn't supposed to happen and therefore is bad. Both **demur** and **hesitate**; both **find reasons** why their **order** is meant to happen; both eventually say, '**Yes**', and permit the **chaos** - that engulfs them - to be **integrated** into their lives.

Several years ago I heard a woman relate a story. **Paula D'Arcy** talked joyfully about life with her husband and daughter. Then, one night a car broadsided their car. She alone survived the crash. It would take years for her to heal: physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Her **well-ordered** life was interrupted by **nonsensical chaos**.

Eventually she discovered herself saying, '*God comes disguised as our lives.*' Her **willingness** to **practice** seeing herself as **God** saw her, **freed** her to permit the **nonsensical chaos** (that took her husband and daughter away from her) to be **integrated** into her life; and to her surprise, her **cynicism**, **criticism** and **rage** were **transformed** into **healed wounds** that **generated life**.

Practicing a **willingness** to permit **disordered chaos** to be **integrated** into our lives comes with a price... our lives - like **King David's**, **Mary's** and **Paula's** - are forever changed.