



23 December 2018

4th Sunday of Advent

Year C

ADVENT: A TIME TO OPEN OUR HEARTS TO THE LORD

On this last Sunday of Advent, so close to the solemnity of Christmas, we are expected to give the final touches to the preparation we have been carrying out during the past weeks. The Lord is already at the gate. It is now for us to open wide the door of our hearts to welcome him as he deserves.

In practical terms, this means to have in ourselves a deep desire to do the Father's will, as the eternal Son himself proclaimed when he was about to come into this world, as we learn from today's Second Reading. This means we should be ready to receive the Lord with the same eagerness, humility, and gratitude with which Elizabeth welcomed him, though still hidden in the womb of his earthly Mother, Mary Most Holy.

The Sun of the day of our salvation is about to rise. Let us open the doors and windows of our hearts that he may flood us with the splendor of his grace and the abundance of his peace!



INTRODUCTORY RITES



Entrance Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Savior.

Greeting

P –Praise and honor to Jesus who comes to fulfill the Father's plan. May his grace and peace be with you all!

All –**And with your spirit!**

Penitential Act

P –Coming together as God's family on this last Sunday of Advent, with confidence let us ask the Lord's forgiveness, that we may welcome him with a purified heart. *(Pause)*

P –You came to gather the nations into the peace of God's Kingdom. Lord, have mercy!

All –**Lord, have mercy!**

P –You fulfill the promises of the prophets of old. Christ, have mercy!

All –**Christ, have mercy!**

P –You come in word and sacrament to strengthen us in holiness. Lord, have mercy!

All –**Lord, have mercy!**

P –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All –**Amen!**

Gloria

(To be recited only during the Simbang Gabi Mass.)

All –Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right

hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen!

Collect (Opening Prayer)

P –Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.

Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All –**Amen!**

LITURGY OF THE WORD



1st Reading

Mi 5:1-4

Since the promise made by God to David through the prophet Nathan, the Jews expected the Messiah to be a descendant of the great King. Today's proph-

ecy further clarifies that he is to be born at Bethlehem, David's birthplace.

R –A proclamation from the Book of the Prophet Micah

Thus says the Lord: You, *Bethlehem–Ephrathah*, too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from of old, from ancient times.

The Lord will give them up, until the time when she who is to give birth has borne, and the rest of his kindred shall return to the children of Israel.

He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord, in the majestic name of the Lord, his God. And they shall remain, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth.

He shall be peace.

The Word of the Lord!

All–Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm *Ps 80*

R –Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved!

R. M. Velez



* O shepherd of Israel, hear-ken, from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth. Rouse your power, and come to save us. **R.**

* Once again, O Lord of hosts, look down from heaven, and see. Take care of this vine,

and protect what your right hand has planted, the son of man whom you yourself made strong. **R.**

* May your help be with the man of your right hand, with the son of man whom you your-self made strong. Then we will no more withdraw from you. Give us new life, and we will call upon your name. **R.**

2nd Reading *Heb 10:5-10*

The Son of God became man to undo, with his perfect obedience, all the cases of disobedience contained in the sins of all human beings. It was his readiness to do the Father's will that made him our savior and our model.

R –A proclamation from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brothers and sisters:

When Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; in holocausts and sin offerings you took no delight. Then I said, 'As is written of me in the scroll, behold, I come to do your will, O God.'"

First he says, "Sacrifices and offerings, holocausts and sin offerings, you neither desired nor delighted in." (These are offered according to the law.) Then he says, "Behold, I come to do your will."

He takes away the first to establish the second. By this "will," we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The Word of the Lord!

All–Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation *Lk 1:38*

All–Alleluia! Alleluia!

Behold, I am the hand-maid of the Lord.

May it be done to me ac-cording to your word.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel

Lk 1:39-45

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth was the first to pro-claim Mary, "Mother of the Lord." Led by the same Spirit, we echo Elizabeth's greeting and welcome Mary into our life, as the mother and bearer of our Savior.

P – The Lord be with you!

All– And with your spirit!

P – A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to Luke

All–Glory to you, O Lord!

Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Eliza-beth, filled with the Holy Spir-it, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the mo-ment the sound of your greet-ing reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

The Gospel of the Lord!

All–Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Homily

Profession of Faith

(Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed)

All–I believe in one God, the Fa-ther almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father be-fore all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made,

GLOSSARY: • *Bethlehem*: A town in the southern region of Palestine called Judah, and later Judea. The name means "House of Bread." It was the native place of David, and according to the prophecy of Micah, it was also destined to be the birthplace of the Messiah. In fact, due to the census ordered by the Roman Emperor, Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, though Mary, his mother, and Joseph, his foster father, resided in Nazareth. • *Ephrathah*: The burial place of Rachel, wife of Jacob and mother of Joseph, the viceroy of Egypt. The prophet Micah identifies Ephrathah with Bethlehem, the place of origin of Jesse, the father of David, and the town where the Messiah was to be born. (See *Mi 5:1* and *Mt 2:5-6*.) • *Holocausts*: Victims offered in sacrifice and totally consumed by fire. • *Sin offerings*: Sacrifices offered in atonement for sins.

consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (*bow*)* **and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*** For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen!

Prayer of the Faithful

P –Together with Mary Most Holy and Elizabeth, let us turn to Jesus, our loving Savior, and plead:

All –Come, Lord Jesus, come!

C –Lord, before time began, you shared life with the Eternal Father. Come now and give us eternal life. And so we pray! **R.**

C –Word of Life, you are our Creator. Come to redeem the work of your hands. And so we pray! **R.**

C –Eternal Son of God, out of love for us, you did not hesitate to become a mortal human being. Come to free us from the power of death. And so we pray! **R.**

C –Divine Wisdom, you are the source of Eternal Life. Come and make us share in your unending glory. And so we pray! **R.**

C –Splendor of the Father, you are the source of our hope in our world darkened by pain and sin. And so we pray! **R.**

C –Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*)

Let us pray! **R.**

P –Lord Jesus, grant that all of us may live this day with the same openness of heart and expectation with which Mary Most Holy prepared herself for your birth. You who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.

All –Amen!



Preparation of the Gifts

P –Pray, brethren . . .

All –May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P –May the Holy Spirit, O Lord, sanctify these gifts laid upon your altar, just as he filled with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Through Christ our Lord.

All –Amen!

Preface of Advent II

P –The Lord be with you!

All –And with your spirit!

P –Lift up your hearts!

All –We lift them up to the Lord!

P –Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

All –It is right and just!

P –It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For all the oracles of the prophets foretold him, the Virgin Mother longed for him with love beyond all telling, John the Baptist sang of his coming and proclaimed his presence when he came.

It is by his gift that already we rejoice at the mystery of his Nativity, so that he may find us watchful in prayer and exultant in his praise.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

All – Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Memorial Acclamation

P –The mystery of faith!

All –When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again!



All –Our Father . . .

P –Deliver us, Lord . . .

All –For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever!

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread

All –Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us. (2x)

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.

Communion

P –Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.

All –Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.)

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

Prayer after Communion

P –Having received this pledge of eternal redemption, we pray, almighty God, that, as the feast day of our salvation draws ever nearer, so we may press forward all the more eagerly to the worthy celebration of the mystery of your Son’s Nativity.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All–Amen!



P –The Lord be with you.
All–And with your spirit!

P –Bow your heads and pray for God’s blessing. (*Pause*)
– You believe that the Son of God became a human being in the womb of the Virgin Mary. May his imminent birth bring you joy and peace.

All–Amen!

P –Christ saved us by carrying out the Father’s plan. May you be as obedient as he was.

All–Amen!

P –Christ was born to bring mankind grace and peace. May he fill you with the gift of eternal life.

All–Amen!

P –May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All–Amen!

P –Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life!

All–Thanks be to God!



Attitudes and Actions Molded by the Spirit

Mankind had a bad record from the very beginning of its history – the criminal record of shutting God out of its plans and life. Such an attitude had few exceptions in Abram, Moses, the prophets . . . And even those exceptions were not always 100% clear. It was only with Mary that a different attitude shone in fullness: an attitude of total openness to the action of God in one’s life and of full availability to cooperate with Him in the actualization of His plan.

Mary was the most open of all to the inspirations and promptings of the Holy Spirit. Like a very sensitive harp, she let the Spirit produce in her and through her the wonderful melody of man’s salvation which only the divine love can initiate and bring to completion. In this way, the miracle of the Incarnation took place, with the Trinity taking the initiative, and Mary responding freely and generously to the Spirit’s action in her.

It is in response to the lead of the Spirit that Mary set out for Elizabeth’s house, to share with her relative the “Good News” she was carrying within her.

Like mankind before Mary and Christ, we, too, may have a bad record when it comes to “openness to God.” We may not be any better than Adam and Eve, or the people before the Flood (*see Gn*

6:5-6), or the builders of the Tower of Babel. (*See Gn 11:3-4.*)

Advent is an opportunity for all of us to evaluate our standing in this respect and to take appropriate action. If we decide to imitate Mary and Elizabeth in their openness to the Spirit, we may be sure that He will work wonders also in us, no matter how insignificant and weak we may consider ourselves. (*See Mi 5:1.*)

We need the Spirit to get out of ourselves, to show an interest in others and share with them the blessings we have received from the Lord, including our joy. (*See attitude of Mary, Lk 1:46-49.*)

We need to be open to the Spirit in imitation of Mary in order to have Christ formed in us, or better, in order to be molded unto him. If we cultivate such an openness and availability, we shall ever more become Christ-like in our thoughts, aspirations, attitudes, actions . . . And thus, we shall be totally committed to do our share in carrying out the Father’s plan of saving love as Christ did. (*See Heb 10:5-7.*)

As the commemoration of our Lord’s birth is at our doorstep, let us remember the billions of people for whom Christmas will be like any other day. Jesus still has to be born in their hearts. Let us pray for them:

***“O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light,
sun of justice, shine on those who dwell
in darkness and the shadow of death.”***



**WORD & LIFE
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