

December 20th

Fourth Sunday of Advent



OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray: Lord, fill our hearts with your love, and as you revealed to us by an angel the coming of your Son as man, so lead us through his suffering and death to the glory of his resurrection, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING

(Prophet Micah announces to the inhabitants of Jerusalem that a Ruler will come from Bethlehem who will bring them peace.)

A reading from the Book of Micah (5:2-5a)

The Lord says this: "You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little 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 days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in travail has brought forth; then the rest of his brethren shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And this shall be peace."

This is the Word of the Lord

PSALM (79)

Response: God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hear us, shine forth from your cherubim throne. O Lord, rouse up your might, O Lord come to our help. R./

God of hosts, turn again, we implore, look down from heaven and see. Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted. R./

May your hand be on the man you have chosen, the man you have given your strength. And we shall never forsake you again: give us life that we may call upon your name. R./

SECOND READING

(The author of Hebrews says that Jesus came, not to offer the sacrifices of the old Law, but to do the will of God. The one perfect sacrifice offered by Christ on Calvary replaces all the former sacrifices.)

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (10:5-10)

Brethren, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired, but a body hast thou prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God,' as it is written of me in the roll of the book." When he said above, "Thou hast neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "Lo, I have come to do thy will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
This is the Word of the Lord

ACCLAMATION (Lk 1:38)

Alleluia, alleluia! "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

(Today's Gospel passage describes the meeting between Mary and her cousin Elizabeth. This meeting invites us to believe in God and share our joy with others.)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St Luke (1:39-45)

Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

This is the Gospel of the Lord