

Wednesday Dec 18th, for the 4th Sunday in Advent

OPENING PRAYER: Father, your eternal Word took flesh on earth when Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Help us to open our whole being to you so that your word may also take flesh in us. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the words of Saint Benedict, “Listen with the ears of your heart.”

- Please note a word, phrase, or verse that seemed to really catch your notice.
- A volunteer slowly read aloud today’s passage Afterwards, we have a few minutes of silent reflection.

READING OF THE ASSIGNED GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

Luke 1:39-45

Mary Visits Elizabeth.

39 During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah,

40 where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

41 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit,^s

42 cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.^t

43 And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord* should come to me?

44 For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.

45 Blessed are you who believed* that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”^u

Notes:

* [1:34] Mary’s questioning response is a denial of sexual relations and is used by Luke to lead to the angel’s declaration about the Spirit’s role in the conception of this child (Lk 1:35). According to Luke, the virginal conception of Jesus takes place through the holy Spirit, the power of God, and therefore Jesus has a unique relationship to Yahweh: he is Son of God.

* [1:36–37] The sign given to Mary in confirmation of the angel’s announcement to her is the pregnancy of her aged relative Elizabeth. If a woman past the childbearing age could become pregnant, why, the angel implies, should there be doubt about Mary’s pregnancy, for nothing will be impossible for God.

* [1:43] Even before his birth, Jesus is identified in Luke as the Lord.

* [1:45] Blessed are you who believed: Luke portrays Mary as a believer whose faith stands in contrast to the disbelief of Zechariah (Lk 1:20). Mary’s role as believer in the infancy narrative should be seen in connection with the explicit mention of her presence among “those who believed” after the resurrection at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:14).

QUESTIONS FOR SHARING

FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. God asked a lot of Mary and Elizabeth. Can you give an example of where God asked a lot of you (or a member of your family)?
2. God made Elizabeth fruitful (meaning *useful* to God) in her old age. How might this speak to the older members of your parish?

3. 2000 years ago, God used *an unlikely place* (Bethlehem), *unlikely people* (poor women) and *unlikely methods* to carry forward his plan. Can you think of modern day examples?

4. How has your Advent been?

Commentary

Just as the small and otherwise obscure village of Bethlehem seems an *unlikely place* to host the promised Messiah, so also are Mary and Elizabeth *unlikely candidates* to witness his presence in such a special way. As *women* of poor means, their election by God would have been looked upon by people of that time as extraordinary and unusual.

Both Mary and Elizabeth experience miraculous conceptions. Mary conceives by the power of the Holy Spirit, and Elizabeth conceives in her old age. Thus, they have much to talk about. In their precious time together, they celebrate the awesome deeds of God in their lives.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth eulogizes Mary and her child. She calls Mary “blessed” for two reasons: she has been chosen to be the Mother of the Lord, and she has placed her trust in the Word of God. Elizabeth, like her son, humbles herself before her much younger cousin. Even before his birth, Jesus’ presence is “good news” and a cause for joy.

In its Advent context, the reading inspires awe for the mystery of Christ’s coming in the flesh. Who is this woman to be greeted in this way? Who is the child in her womb that even before his birth inspired prophetic utterances? Mary’s greatness is her fidelity to God’s Word and her cooperation with his plan.

IS THERE A CAUSE FOR GRATITUDE THIS WEEK?

IS THERE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU HAVE?

CLOSING PRAYER - The Lord's Prayer

Bible Sharing Parish Hall and Zoom
Wednesday, Dec 18 6:30 – 7:30pm
Weekly on Wednesday
Zoom Meeting

Description: Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Blessed Sacrament's Zoom Meeting
Time: Dec 18, 2024 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZolduisqDosE923wHRoszXqNBSkCL57ORPg/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhpjorHtKTthCORpx5Goj4d-jwpiFdj_oPzwjNMS9AeDvnGMBxOZFTRY

Blessed Sacrament is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85136740699?pwd=Q2pXLzdzZFdNNU1NajVpeEtKUohJQTo9>

Meeting ID: 811 6265 5618
Passcode: 280607