
23 Sunday

4th SUNDAY of ADVENT (A)

Isaiah 7: 10 - 14

Ps 24: 1 - 6

Rom 1: 1 - 7

Matt 1: 18 – 24

We are about to greet the new-born Jesus on His birthday. As St Paul greeted the Christians of Rome, let us pray this year that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ would send grace and peace to all of us, to all who are near and dear to us, and to our very troubled and divided world. As Ahaz, King of Juda, in a time of crisis refused to ask the Lord for a sign, relying instead on his own power (his own military force, in fact), we see similar attitudes very common in our present world too: pride, arrogance, self-importance. Let us pray this Christmastime for change of heart, beginning with ourselves, and specially for the leaders and decision-makers of our societies, cities and countries. For their wisdom or follies, their injustices or compassion, their concern for people or their selfish self-interests affect and influence the lives of all of us. But the Lord gave Ahaz a sign, anyway: it was a sign of hope, based on what seems so frail, the birth of a child. Did Ahaz, or will people today accept this sign? The child to be born would be God's child. Can we rely on, put our whole trust and hope in such a seemingly weak sign? Let our Christmas be that sign of hope for our world. As Joseph accepted a situation he didn't understand and trusted in what the Lord told him, may we also name our hope, the hope of the world, this child we celebrate: JESUS, "God saves", God-with-us.

"Let the clouds rain down the Just One, and the earth bring forth a Saviour"

Text wordcount: 276