
21 SUNDAY

4th SUNDAY of ADVENT

Micah 5:1-4
Ps 79: 2-3,15-16,18-19
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1: 39-44

“Let the clouds rain down the Just One, and the earth bring forth a Saviour” (from ch.45 of the Book of Isaiah): expectant words for the Entry Song of the Mass for the 4th Sunday of Advent. The longed-for Saviour is about to appear: but not in the way many people expected. He will come from an unimportant village (Micah 5), and be a man who will offer Himself in sacrifice and in obedience (Hebrews 10). He will bring joy and happiness to the hearts of ordinary simple people like His mother and her cousin Elizabeth (Luke 1), rather than public excitement or noisy demonstrations. The meeting and the conversation between Mary and her cousin is one of the most simply human scenes in the gospel: two expectant mothers delighted with their pregnancy, delighted for each other and delighting in each other’s company. Of course their respective children were to be quite extraordinary, the Messiah himself and his great Announcer. And it was the Holy Spirit who gave Elizabeth the inspiration for her words. What she says in today’s gospel is blessings and congratulations and praise for Mary’s faith. It is not simply her being Jesus’ mother that is Mary’s glory, but that she “believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled”. As Jesus himself would later say, the one who hears the word of God and keeps it is the most blessed. Let this be our Christmas prayer and attitude: really to hear God’s word in these days with deep faith, and to seek only to choose and do what is His will for us, His will for our peace.

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