

4th SUNDAY of Advent

(Yr C)

Reading 1

Citation: Micah, Chap. 5, Verses 1-4a
Micah 5: 1-4a

Micah foresees the advent of the Messiah as one of unity with God in everything. Israel will produce the ruler through one of its women; but all will be at the behest of God. Unlike the rulers of his day, Micah sees the Messiah as decisive, firm, strong, and in conformity with the will of God. Be Micah!

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Micah

Thus says the LORD:

You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, (very short pause)
too small to be among the clans of Judah, (very short pause)
from you
shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; (very short pause)
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient times. (short pause)

Therefore the Lord will give them up, (very short pause)
until the time when she who is to give birth has borne, (almost parenthetical?)
and the rest of his kindred shall return to the children of Israel. (firm, proud)

He shall stand firm (confident) (very short pause)
and shepherd his flock by the strength of the LORD, (again, confident)
in the majestic name of the LORD, (awe) (very short pause)
his God; (reverent awe)
and they shall remain, (short pause)
for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; (confident; firm) (short pause)
he shall be peace. (slow, each word distinctly & firm)

The word of the Lord.

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Reading 2

Citation: Hebrews, Chap. 10, Verses 5-10
Hebrews10: 5-10

The author of Hebrews picks up from Paul's idea that Christ came to establish a very different covenant with all of mankind than the Jews had envisioned for themselves. The Christ is a living symbol of the bedrock value of the new covenant – God's Love is accepted by humanity and humanity conforms itself with God's will. The author reminds us all that this relationship is to become the all-important one in our lives.

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brothers and sisters:

(some urgency, here) (short pause)

When Christ came into the world,
he said:

(getting the Assembly to be ready to hear)
(very short pause)

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but a body you prepared for me;
in holocausts and sin offerings you took no delight.

(short pause)
(short pause)
(finality; voice goes down)

Then I said,
'As is written of me in the scroll,
behold, I come to do your will, O God.' "

(short pause)
(almost parenthetically)
(be firm; insisting) (Pause)

First he says,
"Sacrifices and offerings, holocausts and sin offerings,
you neither desired nor delighted in."
These are offered according to the law.

(very short pause)
(matter-of-factly)
(short pause)
(almost parenthetical) (Pause)

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.

(very short pause)
(matter-of-factly) (short pause)
(voice goes slightly up?)
(voice goes slightly down?) (short pause)
(let "will" stand out)
(the "proof" of the argument)
(very short pause)
(very short pause)
(be emphatic)

The word of the Lord.

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Gospel

Citation: Luke, Chap. 1, Verses 39-45
Luke 1: 39-45

Mary and Elizabeth meet and express their deep emotions in a song that has echoed through centuries. There is much joy, here. Be that joyful singer, Elizabeth, as she recognizes the Mother of God for all ages to come.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

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.

(pure storytelling)
(almost parenthetical)

(very short pause)

When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting,
the infant leaped in her womb,
and Elizabeth,
filled with the Holy Spirit,
cried out in a loud voice and said,

(parenthetical?)

"Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb."

(raise volume a bit)
(very short pause)

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

(question in your voice)
(very short pause)

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

(voice goes up)
(voice goes down)

Blessed are you who believed
that what was spoken to you by the Lord
would be fulfilled."

(two stresses)
(great satisfaction)

The Gospel of the Lord.