

FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

YEAR B

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God,
you chose ordinary people,
common people,
to make a home for Jesus.
We want to make a home
for him in our hearts;
give us the love to do this,
and let him be our brother,
forever and ever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

God's love is faithful! Mary will give birth to a son. Holy is his name!

Our first reading focuses on the promise made to David—a member of his family would be a great king whose kingdom would last forever. This reading is filled with the fidelity of God: "I called you. . . I have always been with you. . . I promise to be with you forever. . . He will be like a son to me. . . I will never take my love away from him."

That promise is fulfilled in the Annunciation. By the power of the Spirit, Mary will give birth to a child, and "he will be called the Son of God, . . . and he will be the ruler of the family of David."

In both of these readings we see the power of God at work in human beings—God's faithful love made real in history.

FIRST READING: *2 Samuel 7:8-16*

*This is a reading
from the second book of Samuel.*

God said to King David,

"I am the one who found you
while you were taking care of your sheep
in the pasture.

I called you to be a leader of my people.
I have been with you wherever you went.
I have destroyed all your enemies.

I will make you famous
like the great people of the earth.

I will build a house for you,
and I will be with you
and your family forever.

I will give my people
a special place to live in peace without fear.
And when you die,

I will make a member of your family
a great king.


He will be like a son to me,
and I will never take my love away from him.

I will make your family strong,
and your kingdom will last forever."

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: *Psalm 89*

RESPONSE:



God, my heart de-lights in you. Ho-ly is your name. —

VERSES:



1. I sing, your love is won-der-ful. You are al-ways faith-ful.
2. You said to Da-vid long a-go: You will al-ways bless him.

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GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

(clap)

By the pow'r of the Spir - it Ma - ry will give
 birth to a Son called Je - sus. By the pow'r of the
 Spir - it Em - man - u - el is near!
 Al - le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia! "Em - man - u - el is near."

GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38

This is a reading from the Gospel of Luke.

The angel Gabriel was sent from God
 to the town of Nazareth in Galilee.
 The angel went to a young virgin
 who was engaged to Joseph, from the family of David.
 The virgin's name was Mary.

The angel said to her,

"Rejoice, Mary, you have been blessed by God.

The Lord is with you, and you are filled with grace."

Mary was very confused and disturbed
 by what the angel said,
 and she wondered what it could mean.

The angel said to her,

"Don't be afraid, Mary. God has chosen you.

You are going to give birth to a baby.

You will give him the name, Jesus.

He will be great, and he will be called the Son of God.

He will be the ruler of the family of David,

and his kingdom will never end."

Mary said to the angel,

"How can this happen, since I do not have a husband?"

The angel answered her,

"The power of God will make it possible.

The Holy Spirit will come to you,
 and this Holy Child will be called the Son of God.

And your cousin, Elizabeth, is also going to have a baby
 even though she seems too old,
 for nothing is impossible with God."

And Mary said,

"I am the servant of the Lord.

Let what you have said be done."

And the angel left her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Advent is a season of hope—hope in the fulfillment of God's promise made long ago, hope in a better world because Jesus was born, hope in eternal life when Jesus comes in glory. All of the readings during Advent have given us hope. Help the children see that God's promises never fail and that God loves us and is always faithful.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent, in all three cycles, focuses on the relationship between the creative power of the Holy Spirit and the human agent, Mary, in the role of salvation. Today is a day for reflecting with the children on the role of Mary. Help the children see Mary as a human person, a woman who lived an ordinary life. If we create an image of Mary which gives the impression that she is somehow different from the rest of humanity, we strip her fiat—her freely-given response to God in faith—of its true meaning. We also deny ourselves and the children the model for growing in the reality that we, like Mary, are called to total faith in God and that, as human beings like Mary, we can do that. Help the children understand that, like Mary, we can bring Christ to others. Help them see and admire in Mary her active, free, and obedient response to God. It is in this way that the children will see in Mary a model that they can not only look up to, but can indeed imitate. Help them see that in doing this we are also truly the servant of the Lord, and that when we say, "Let it be done to me as you have said," we also make Christ present in our world.

You might make the Annunciation real by asking the children questions such as:

- Where did Mary live?
- Who was she going to marry?
- How did the angel Gabriel greet Mary?
- Why was Mary confused?
- What did Gabriel tell Mary?
- Why was Mary's answer to the angel so special?

Help the children see that Mary said "yes" even though she didn't understand everything God was asking through the angel.