

FIRST READING

The mystery kept secret for endless ages is now revealed.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

16:25-27

Brother and sisters:

Praise God!

He can make you strong by means of my good news,
which is the message about Jesus Christ.

For ages and ages this message was kept secret,
but now at last it has been told.

The eternal God commanded his prophets to write about the good news,
so that all nations would obey and have faith.

And now, because of Jesus Christ,
we can praise the only wise God forever! Amen.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Luke 1:47 and 49, 53-54

R. (8) God is king of all the earth!

All of you nations,
clap your hands and shout
joyful praises to God.
The Lord Most High is fearsome,
the ruler of all the earth.

R. God is king of all the earth!

God is ruler of all the earth!
Praise God with songs.
God rules the nations
from his sacred throne.

R. God is king of all the earth!

ALLELUIA

Luke 1:38

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the servant of the Lord:
let it be done to me according to your word.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

You will conceive and bear a son.

† A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke 1:36-38

God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee
with a message for a virgin named Mary.
She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David.
The angel greeted Mary and said,
“You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you.”

Mary was confused by the angel’s words
and wondered what they meant.
Then the angel told Mary, “Don’t be afraid!
God is pleased with you, and you will have a son.
His name will be Jesus.
He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High.
The Lord God will make him king,
as his ancestor David was.
He will rule the people of Israel forever,
and his kingdom will never end.”

Mary asked the angel, “How can this happen?
I am not married!”

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come down to you,
and God’s power will come over you.
So your child will be called the holy Son of God.

“Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son,
even though she is old.
No one thought she could ever have a son,
but in three months she will have a son.
Nothing is impossible for God!”

Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant!
Let it happen as you have said."

And the angel left her.

The gospel of the Lord.

Fourth Sunday of Advent—Cycle B

Prayer: Dear Jesus, only one more week until your birthday. So many things happening! Every thing is so pretty. Help me to remember that Christmas is all about you and not how many presents I get.

Readings:

Romans 16:25-27
Psalm Luke 1:47 and 49, 53-54
Luke 1:36-38

Catechist:

Rush! Rush! Rush! How many Christmas cards have you sent out or are you like me, waiting until the last minute. The good news is that the Church celebrates the Christmas Season for 12 days (ring a bell!) or more since we celebrate until the Baptism of the Lord. This is a Sunday to really spend time to ponder with Mary, her “yes” to God. An angel, translated literally from the Greek word meaning, messenger of God. The visit of an Angel to a young, unmarried, woman, was surprisingly a rare occurrence in the social, cultural and religious milieu of first century Palestine. Culturally, women were of no value in a male dominated society, until she was married and only to bring honor to her husband. A woman’s greatest valued honor was in her virginity and then birthing sons to honor her husband. Imagine the conditions in which Mary’s yes to God would indicate her mission would take place in secret in a dangerous social environment; for her pregnancy would bring great shame to her father and family with a social, cultural and religious law casting a sentence of death! Not a comfortable mission to say “yes”. God’s message to Mary: ‘be not afraid, you have been blessed by God and you will have a son named Jesus’. Mary was troubled by the meaning of this message. She opened her heart, questioned how the message would be fulfilled, and responded with her whole being (obedience) to God: I am the servant of the Lord! Let it be! Mary would give up her reputation for a greater honor. God would be her strength. For nothing is impossible with God.

How does God strengthen you? How do you use the gifts of the Scriptures, grace, and the Christian community to strengthen you in fulfilling God’s will? What is your gift to Jesus?

MARY’S SONG: I PRAISE YOU, O GOD, WITH MY WHOLE BEING.
MY SPIRIT DELIGHTS IN YOU, GOD OF BLESSING!
(TEXT: JEAN WOLBERT, OSB)

Do you get anxious, excited, or scared when you are surprised?

Christmas will soon be here. We’ll get presents, good food and lots of hugs. But, remember what Christmas really means. We wait for Jesus, just like his mother did after she said “yes” to God.

How can we say “yes” to God this Christmas? How can we make this holy season better for others.

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Activity: In various colors of construction paper cut circles about 4 inches in diameter, using a hole-punch make one hole at the edge of the circle, to draw through a colored string of yarn, long enough to place over the head. Depending on the age of the child, write the words: I say YES to God! Glitter glue or letters cut out from news paper, to paste onto the circle.

