



Liturgy Cycle C

Fourth Sunday Of Advent

The Lord Is At The Door

Introduction

In a few days we celebrate the birthday of Christ our Saviour
We are asked to prepare our hearts to receive him like Mary did.
She will help us. Let us turn to her.

Christ came most readily to those who had most need of him, that is to the unfortunate, the sinful, the destitute — those who were 'empty'. Let us come to him in our sinfulness and emptiness.

Shepherd of Israel, you rouse your might and come to our help
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, you let your face shine on us and we are saved.
Christ, have mercy.

You give life to all who call upon your name.
Lord, have mercy.

First Reading (Micah 5:1-4)

Jerusalem was under siege and David's dynasty was in jeopardy. But the prophet said that salvation would come from a comparatively insignificant place -- Bethlehem. From there a new leader would come to gather together the scattered exiles and unite the nation once more.

Second Reading (Hebrews 10:5-10)

The sacrifices of the Mosaic Law were unable to purify people from sin. Only Christ, through his obedience and sacrifice of self, was able to bring about the reconciliation between God and his people.

Gospel (Luke 1:39-45)

This deals with Mary's visit to Elizabeth Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth praises Mary and hints at the uniqueness of the child she has just conceived.

Prayer Of The Faithful

We celebrate Christmas not just as individuals but as a community. We benefit from each other's example and support. Let us pray to our heavenly Father, who so loved the world that he sent his only Son, not to condemn us but to save us.

R: Come, Lord Jesus.

For all the followers of Jesus: that they may experience a renewal of their faith in him this Christmas. Let us pray.

R: Come, Lord Jesus.



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For all government leaders: that they may never despise any of their fellow human beings, since through Christ's coming we are all children of God. Let us pray.

R: Come, Lord Jesus.

That all families which are scattered may be reunited: that those in distress may experience relief. Let us pray.

R: Come, Lord Jesus.

That each of us this Christmas may extend the hand of understanding, forgiveness and friendship to all. but especially to those from whom we may be estranged. Let us pray.

R: Come, Lord Jesus.

Let us pray:

Father, when your Son came among us he took upon himself a human nature like ours. Grant that having shared our human lives he may give us a share in his divine life. We ask this through the same Christ our Lord.

Communion Reflection

It has been claimed that, except for some sincerely religious people, Christmas has become an occasion of dusty sentimentality — something pretty but not quite authentic. There is more than a little truth in this.

There are people who all year long scarcely give the teachings of Christ a thought, much less live by them, who on Christmas Eve wallow in cheap and sentimental piety.

We have to be careful not to fall into the same trap. Mary, who is at the centre of today's Gospel, will help us. She is a great example.

No sooner has she said her 'Yes' to God than she arose and went with haste to help her cousin Elizabeth. Her religion was not a matter of mere sentimentality. It was the expression of a genuine feeling, a feeling that she converted into deeds.

By all means let us light the Christmas candles for our children and sing the carols. But let us not be content with mere sentimentality. Let us demand more of ourselves. If it is true that only love can redeem us. then let our love be true, and don't let us confine it to one day in the year.