

**“Regardless of what anyone may personally think or believe about him, Jesus of Nazareth has been the dominant figure in the history of Western culture for almost twenty centuries. If it were possible, with some sort of super-magnet, to pull up out of that history every scrap of metal bearing at least a trace of his name, how much would be left? It is from his birth that most of the human race dates its calendars, it is by his name that millions curse and in his name that millions pray.”**

**—Jaroslav Pelikan**

**The Fourth Sunday in Advent  
December 19, 2021**

The theme of the fourth week in Advent in presentation: we celebrate that glorious moment when the angels announced the thrilling news of the Incarnation. In the womb of the virgin Mary, God the Son became one of us.

Arise, shine for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.  
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and his glory will be seen upon you.  
And nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your rising (Isa 60.1-3).

**The sun shall be no more  
your light by day,  
nor for brightness shall the moon  
give you light;  
but the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your God will be your glory.  
Your sun shall no more go down,  
nor your moon withdraw itself;  
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,  
and your days of mourning shall be ended.  
Your people shall all be righteous;  
they shall possess the land forever,  
the branch of my planting, the work of my hands,  
that I might be glorified (Isa 60.19-21).**

**Let Us Pray**

**When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.  
And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a  
loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your  
womb" (Lk 1.41-42)!**

## **A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah:**

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.  
And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.  
And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.  
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,  
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,  
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;  
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.  
Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;  
and a little child shall lead them.  
The cow and the bear shall graze,  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,  
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain;  
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11.1-9).

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **A Reading from the Gospel of Luke:**

And Mary said,  
“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.  
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for he who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;  
he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring forever” (Lk 1.46-55).

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Hymn No. 196*

*COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS*

*Hymn No. 203*

*HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING*

**The Prophet Isaiah on the Incarnation**

**Isaiah 9.1-7**

**Reflections on the Incarnation**

**“A Faith Unlike Any Other”**

*Hymn No. 208*

*O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL*

*Hymn No. 195*

*JOY TO THE WORLD! THE LORD IS COME*

**Receive the Lord’s Blessing:**

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope” (Rom 15.13).