

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 22, 2024

Gospel: (Luke 1:39-45)

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. 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, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Reflection:

The gospel for this Fourth Sunday of Advent presents us with the meeting of two pregnant women, one older but no wiser about such things than the other quite young mother-to-be, for this was the first child for both. Such a meeting! The infant in Elizabeth's womb gave a mighty kick when Mary greeted her, and Elizabeth recognized the baby of Mary's womb as her Lord. Jesus, the Son of God Most High, became incarnate—took on human flesh—as a necessary step to salvation. Jesus's body was "prepared" as the fruit of Mary's womb. He came to "do God's will." Mary believed and it was fulfilled. She didn't count the cost. Neither can we. (Living Liturgy, p.18)

Vincenzian Meditation:

The mystery of the Incarnation was the permanent inspiration of St. Vincent's life. It must be ours, too. We shall only fully see Christ in the poor when we have fully seen God in Christ. That is why all that we do and say will have meaning only if it is born of our relationship with Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man. What we bring to the poor must be more than a program for the betterment of their material and economic condition. We must bring something of the peace, the joy and the spiritual freedom which we ourselves have experienced from being present to Jesus Christ through prayer and the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance. I hope that through giving some time this Christmas to the poor and lonely—often a listening heart is of more value than money—you will have enriched the lives of some of those millions of people who have so much less to eat than we have, and so much less to live for. (McCullen, *Deep Down Things*, p.49-50)

Discussion: (*Share your thoughts on the readings after a moment of silence*)

How have we brought peace and joy to the poor this Advent?

Closing Prayer:

As we prepare for Christmas we pray for those who live in doubt,

-may our lives be a sign of faith.

We pray for those who live in fear and oppression,

-may our lives be a sign of hope.

We pray for those who do not experience God's love,

-may our lives be a sign of charity. Amen

