

## Homily 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Advent Year B 2023

R H Fuller says: *Christian faith sees the promise to, and covenant with, David fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ.* Jesus' birth is the greatest sign to us that he keeps his promises. We have this announcement today made by God to Mary through the angel Gabriel (meaning *God is my strength*). It is the strength and power of God that enables Mary to have the child Jesus. The sacramental gift of Baptism is the way in which Jesus is born into our lives.

Blessed Isaac of Stella believes this means: *That every Christian is believed to be a bride of God's Word, a mother of Christ, like Mary, His daughter and sister - at once virginal and fruitful. These words are used in a universal sense of the church, in a special sense of Mary and in a particular sense of the individual Christian. Christ dwelt for nine months in the tabernacle of Mary's womb. He dwells until the end of the ages in the tabernacle of the church's faith, of which we are part.* At Christmas, Christ's presence is renewed in a very special way within us to help us be better at bringing the Christ we bear to others wherever we find ourselves and in whatever situation we happen to be.

Wouldn't it be good if encountering someone they greeted us with the words: *when you came up to me the Christ within me leapt for joy?* Having said 'yes' with the willingness to do God's will and allowing God to use her, Mary had 9 months to reflect on what this decision would mean for her and for us; Macrina Wiederkehr osb presents it like this:

### ***Life unfolds a petal at a time, slowly.***

*The beauty of the process is crippled  
when I try to hurry growth.*

*Life has its inner rhythm  
which must be respected.*

*It cannot be rushed or hurried.*

*Like daylight stepping out of darkness,  
like morning creeping out of night,  
life unfolds slowly a petal at a time  
like a flower opening to the sun... slowly.*

*God's call unfolds a Word at a time... slowly.*

*A disciple is not made in a hurry.*

*Slowly I become like the One  
to whom I am listening.*

*Life unfolds a petal at a time  
like you and I becoming followers of Jesus,  
discipled into a new way of living  
deeply and slowly.*

*Be patient with life's unfolding petals.*

*If you hurry the bud, it withers.*

*If you hurry life, it limps.*

*Each unfolding is a teaching  
a movement of grace filled with silent pauses,  
breath-taking beauty, tears and heartaches.*

*Life unfolds a petal at a time deeply and slowly.*

*May it come to pass!!*

As Christ will be born anew within us soon, we need time afterwards (possibly months??) to reflect on what this means for us, for the those around us and the world in which we live.

- What do you call an obnoxious reindeer? Rude-olph.
- What's every parent's favourite Christmas Carol? Silent Night.
- What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations? Tinsil-itis!