Our Faith on Sunday

LITURGY

4th Sunday of Advent (A)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: Cf. Is 45:8

Drop down the dew from above, you heavens,
and let the clouds rain down the Just One;
let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-14

The maiden is with child.

PSALM: Ps 23:1-6. R. Cf.vv7.10

R) Let the Lord enter!
He is the king of glory.

The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,
the world and all its peoples.
It is he who set it on the seas;
on the waters he made it firm. **(R)**

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?
The man with clean hands and pure heart,
who desires not worthless things. **(R)**

He shall receive blessings from the Lord
and reward from the God who saves him.
Such are the men who seek him,
seek the face of the God of Jacob. **(R)**

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

Jesus Christ, descendant of David, Son of God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia, alleluia! Mt 1:23
The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,
a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-24

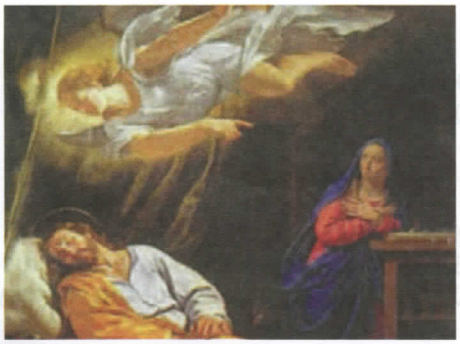
Jesus is born of Mary who was betrothed to Joseph, son of David.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON: Is 7:14

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son;
and his name will be called Emmanuel.



GOSPEL REFLECTION



Today's Gospel is, apart from anything else, a huge tribute to St Joseph, the 'quiet' man of the Scriptures. First of all, he wants to spare Mary the embarrassment of being an unmarried mother and then he shows enormous faith in believing and carrying out what the angel of the Lord says to him in a dream. If ever we find ourselves lacking in faith, especially in situations that seem almost impossible, we can look to the example of Joseph. What is key to Joseph's story is his humility – his accepting the will of God, even though the explanation goes beyond belief in a certain sense. The humbler we are and deeper our faith in God the more likely we are to be able to respond in what may seem to be very difficult circumstances. And the more often we respond to what God is asking us, the closer we will grow to him and to our brothers and sisters.

EVANGELII GAUDIUM (JOY OF THE GOSPEL)



THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF EVANGELIZATION

CONCERN FOR THE VULNERABLE

215. There are other weak and defenceless beings who are frequently at the mercy of economic interests or indiscriminate exploitation. I am speaking of creation as a whole. We human beings are not only the beneficiaries but also the stewards of other creatures. Thanks to our bodies, God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement. Let us not leave in our wake a swath of destruction and death which will affect our own lives and those of future generations.[177]

177 Cf. Propositio 56.

GOSPEL CHILDHOOD
The 'Little Way' of St Therese of Lisieux for everyone*

PARABLE OF THE LITTLE BIRD

It is easy to get the impression from some writers that only spiritual eagles can attain the heights. Others have to remain content with lesser aspirations.

Well, I'm no eagle, but in my own way I have caught the trick of looking up at the sun of love, even if it seems far away and I can't get there on my own wings.

So what should I do? Die of discouragement? Not likely! No matter what happens I just keep my eyes fixed on the sun, come rain, storm or sunshine. Even if I can't see it because the sky is filled with dark clouds, I know the sun shines on. To be sure, when the storm is raging inside me it can be difficult to believe that there is anything else. But I just stay put anyway. I can't see the sun but I believe it is there nonetheless. The sun doesn't depend on me for its existence any more than God does! I build my life on faith, not sight.

And what of the times when I seem distracted and turn away. I'm such a little bird that it's impossible never to hop off from time to time. I turn aside to pick up a grain of wheat or catch a worm. I wet my wings in a bird bath for pleasure, or stop to notice a pretty flower. I'm no eagle with strong pinions and steady heavenward gaze. I am full of distractions.

But when I fail I don't rush away into a corner and eat my heart out. I just turn back to the Sun of love and dry my wet wings in its rays. I tell God all about my faults, chirping away with confidence, sure of being heard. That way I don't allow myself to be dejected for long. I'm not surprised at my weaknesses, so what's the use of wallowing in self-pity at my failure. What do I expect of myself!

And if God seems to give no sign of listening to my chirps of sorrow, well then, I just have to put up with the discomfort of my wet wings and stay out in the cold. So what! That's real life, not unmitigated disaster!

* Simplified and illustrated by Elizabeth Ruth Obbard. First published in 2005 in Great Britain by: New City Unit 1 Polaris Centre 41 Brownfields Welwyn Garden City AL7 1AN https://www.newcity.co.uk/book-tag/focolare/ ISBN: 13:978-0904287-94-3

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4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT – 22nd DECEMBER 2019

MASSES THIS WEEK

Sunday (Saturday)	5.30pm	Geoff Bliss (RIP)
Sunday	9.00am	Ivor Hopla (RIP)
Monday 23rd December	11.45am	**NO MASS**
Tuesday 24th December	**Christmas Eve**	
	11.30pm	Carol Service followed by Procession to the Crib
	12.00am	**Midnight Mass of the Nativity of Christ**
Wednesday 25th December	**Christmas Day**	
	10.15am	Mass of Christmas Day
Thursday 26th December	11.45am	St. Stephen, First Martyr.
Friday 27th December	11.45 am	St. John, Apostle & Evangelist – Caridade Da Rocha
Sunday 29th December	**The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**	
(Saturday)	5.30pm	Bridget Ward (RIP)
Sunday	9.00am	Cathie Luckhurst (RIP)

Confessions are available after Saturday evening Mass and on request.

Feast Days This Week; 28th December – The Holy Innocents, Martyrs.

We offer our prayers and condolences to Emily and the family of Keith Harris who recently died. The funeral date has yet to be arranged.

Please remember in your prayers: Sick; Nigel Clark, Judy Atkins, Sofia Mayorga, Una Hewitt, Mary Jones, David Ruth, Maria Maynard, Liz Mevin and Diane Boba.

Please remember in you prayers this week in The Churches Together List the residents of:
Vaughan Mead, The Park, Harpenden Lane, Woollams, Ver Meadow, Luton Lane, Aubrey Lane, Cheverells Close, Fullerton Close, Long Meadow, Pickford Road, The Dell, Delmer End Lane, Old Watling Street & Trowley Bottom.

Advent Giving Calendar
Thank you for your generous response of food and other supplies given. They have all been handed on to the local food bank via St. Mary's Church.

Readers and Extraordinary Ministers are needed for the Christmas Services.
If you are able to help please put your name on the list at the back of the Church.
New Rotas are also available.

An Invitation from the Mothers Union of St. Mary's Church, Redbourn, to the women of St. John Fisher to attend the Ecumenical Carol Service to be held at St. Mary's Church on **Tuesday 7th January at 10.00am**

Father Michael wishes everyone a Happy Holy Christmas.
May you all have a good and peaceful New Year.

Fr. Michael Mannion