

## **Advent, Daily Readings – Week 4**

Advent 2015 daily reflections

### **Monday December 21**

**Scripture Reading: Luke 1:26-38**

*Scripture Verse: “Let it be with me according to your word...” Luke 1: 38*

On Friday we will be celebrating December 25--Christmas Day. We continue to make all sorts of preparations in our homes. We continue to prepare our hearts for the birth of Christ in our hearts.

But how could Mary be prepared for a visit from an angel? How could she be prepared for the announcement that she would bear the Son of God, the Messiah/the Christ to the world? How could she be prepared for the news that the Son of God would be her son, part of her family?

And yet, God wants to be born in us, too. In Jesus, God comes to us, speaks God’s Word of love and forgiveness to us and includes us in God’s family. In Jesus, God is with us in our life.

Christmas is the celebration of God being in the midst of all of us. We believe that, because of Jesus, God now abides with us and with all humanity..

We acknowledge this reality in the sacrament of baptism. Sacraments are links between God’s Word-made-flesh Jesus and our lives. Through Baptism, God makes us part of Jesus family, the church. Through the Holy Eucharist, God nourishes and strengthens us with the presence of the Risen Jesus. Through the sacraments, God grows in our hearts so that, like Mary, we may bear Jesus to the world.

*Prayer: Loving God, Come to us and take your place in our hearts. Let it be with us according to your word. Amen*

### **Tuesday December 22**

**Scripture Reading: Luke 1:39-55**

*Scripture Verse: “He... has lifted up the lowly” Luke 1:52*

In today’s reading we hear what Mary did when the angel told her that she would be the mother of Jesus the Christ. She went to the home of her cousin Elizabeth who was pregnant with her child who grew up to become John the Baptist. This passage records the words of Mary’s song which we know as *the Magnificat*. In this poem Mary gives praise to God for the baby she carries and praise that, through Jesus, God will lift up the weak and the lowly.

Mary sees the slow, but sure, working of God in her pregnancy. What faith she must have had! She saw in the coming birth of the messiah, God reaching out to lift up the lowly. The faith of Mary makes her into a model disciple. In Advent we are invited to pray that we too will be open to seeing and participating in God's work in the world knowing that God will lift us up when we are weak.

*Prayer: Loving God, come to us. Raise us up when we are down. Humble us when we are proud. Amen*

### **Wednesday December 23**

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 1: 1-13

*Scripture Verse: "But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son" Hebrews 1:1*

Bureaucracy depends upon a chain of command. Big business, the military, the government rely on the chain of command to move information "up" and orders "down". Like the players in the old childrens' game "telephone" a chain of command can move information well or poorly. People in bureaucracies tend cling to their chain of command, no matter how poorly it works and how frustrating it can be.

The author of Hebrews writes, "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets." Sounds a bit like a chain of command. From God to prophets...from the prophets to the people... the messages of God filtered down. But sometimes God's message of love and forgiveness was filtered out and replaced with rules and regulations.

So God decided to tell us himself.

"But in these last days he has spoken by his Son." Through the birth of Jesus God now speaks to us as one of us and says, "You are my child. I love you". Through the birth of Jesus, God's true nature (God is Love) is revealed to us in a human life.

*Prayer: Loving God, we give you thanks that in Jesus you come to us and speak your message of love and forgiveness to us. Amen*

### **Thursday December 24**

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-14

*Scripture Passage "The word became flesh and dwelt among us" John 1:14*

Here is some very important information. 16-2-10. Are you glad you know those numbers? Probably not, because right now those numbers are just useless information to you. They are just random numbers.

But suppose you had a bike or perhaps a generator that you didn't want to be stolen. You would probably get a chain and a lock to protect the bike from thieves. Suppose the combination for the lock was 16-2-20.

Knowing the numbers without knowing about the lock and chain is not helpful. Using the lock and chain without knowing the numbers would be even worse, especially if the bike was locked. But the combination of the lock and chain and numbers would be very useful.

In today's reading John says that Jesus came to his own people. Many of them knew him and yet they did not know him. Many of them did not understand his significance. We too can know a lot about Jesus and the details of his birth, his life, his teachings etc but unless we know what all that information is for, it is less than helpful. Jesus came so that God's love, grace, truth and glory would shine in the darkness of our lives and in the darkness of the world. That is the reason for Christmas....the reason for Jesus.

*Prayer: God of light, come to us. Help us always to see the combination of your love and our need for that love. Amen*