

Sunday between 18 and 24 December
Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year C)

First Reading - Micah 5.2-5a

A reading from the book of the prophet Micah.

You, O Bethlehem,
are one of the smallest
of all
the clans
of Judah.

And yet from you
will come
the one who is to rule
for me
in all Israel,
whose origin
is long ago, in ancient days,
says the Lord.

Israel will be desolate
until the mother
brings forth this child.

But then all Israel
will be gathered together.

And this child
will stand tall,
and tend the flock,
as a good shepherd,
in the strength of the Lord,
and in the majesty
of the name
of the Lord God.

And the people
will dwell
in peace.

This is the word of the Lord.

Second Reading - Hebrews 10.1,4-7,10

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

The old law
contained only a shadow
of the good things
that were yet to come.

Under that law, the same sacrifices
were offered continually, year after year,
demonstrating
that they can never make perfect
those who offer them;
that it is impossible
for the blood
of bulls
and goats
to take away sin.

So when Christ
comes into the world, he says,
'Sacrifices and offerings
you have not desired.

In burnt-offerings, and sin-offerings,
you have taken no pleasure.

But a body you have given me.

See, O God,
I have come to do your will.'

And so,
it is by God's will
that we have now been
sanctified
through the offering
of the body
of Jesus Christ,
once for all.

This is the word of the Lord.

Gospel - Luke 1.39-55

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Luke.

Mary set out
and went with haste
to a town
in the hill country of Judah,
where she entered the house of Zekariah,
and greeted Elizabeth.

And Elizabeth,
filled with the Holy Spirit, said to Mary,
'Blessed are you
amongst women!

And blessed is the child
that you will bear!

And blessed am I, that the mother of my Lord
should come to me!

For as soon as I heard your greeting,
the child in my womb leapt for joy!

Blessed indeed are you, for trusting
that the message spoken to you
by the Lord
would be fulfilled.'

And Mary said, 'My soul
gives praise
to you, O Lord.

My spirit rejoices in you, my God and Saviour.

For you have looked
with favour
on your lowly servant.

All generations
will call me blessed,
for you have done
great things for me.

Holy is your name!
Your mercy is on all who honour you,
in every generation.

You have
revealed your power,
and scattered the proud
in their vanity.

You have brought down the powerful,
and lifted up the lowly.

You have filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

In your everlasting mercy
you have come to the help
of your lowly people,
fulfilling the promise you made
to our ancestors, to Abraham
and his descendants, for ever.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.