

THE WORD OF THE LORD : TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

At the Liturgy at Nine Thirty THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

As Christmas approaches, the Gospel accounts of the birth of Jesus command our attention more and more. Today's reading from Matthew, with its report of Joseph's marriage to Mary, who is "with child of the holy Spirit," is the most obvious selection for the last Sunday of Advent. The Old Testament lesson contains the lines quoted by Matthew, Isaiah 7.14. The verses from Psalm 80, a petition of the people for help from their enemies, anticipates the Gospel's reference to Joseph and present the situation of need to which the coming of Jesus responds. The key lines of the Epistle are those of the christological confession that set the coming of Jesus in the context of God's activity in history.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Presider: Heavenly Father, who chose the Virgin Mary, full of grace, to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour, now fill us with your grace, that we in all things may embrace your will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7.10-16

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

The word of the Lord
R/. Thanks be to God

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 80.1-7, 16-18



Show the light of your coun - te - nance, and we_ shall be saved.

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim. In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us. Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. *R/.*

O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people? You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink. You have made us the derision of our neighbours, and our enemies laugh us to scorn. Restore us, O God of hosts; show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. *R/.*

Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, the son of man you have made so strong for yourself. And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name. Restore us, O Lord God of hosts; show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. *R/.*

SECOND READING: Romans 1.1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all

God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord
R/. Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Matthew 1.23

Alleluia. Alleluia. A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel: God with us. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1.18-25

R/. Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God with us". When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took Mary as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of Christ

R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Presider: Gracious God, by the power of the Spirit who sanctified the mother of your Son, make holy all we offer you this day. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

People: Amen

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Presider: Faithful God, in this sacrament we receive the promise of salvation. May we, like the Virgin Mary, be obedient to your will. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

People: Amen

