

## From the Pastor's Office

### *4th Sunday of Advent*

From ancient times we have come to believe that it is God who watches over us. In the first lesson, God speaks to King David through Nathan the prophet. It was I the Lord your God who took you from your pasture. It was I who took care of you. I have been with you always. I have destroyed your enemies. I will send you my Heir to take care of you. The heir, Messiah, the Prince of Peace will come from such a lowly place when everyone else expected him to come from Jerusalem. His coming into the world would be small and quiet. It makes us wonder how such a lowly beginning can make a difference to a world that is constantly at war. At the time of this prophecy, Jerusalem was under siege. The lowly birth of Jesus contradicts our tradition of storytelling. We are accustomed to telling stories about handsome princes living in palaces full of bravery, and great heroes who are valiant in wars. They expected their Messiah to be a warrior King. He would drive out the invading armies once and for all and peace would come again. This is the mythology of making peace. We believe that peace will come by winning the war. The great powers do their dance on the battlefield. They fight for peace but instead, there is more war. Look at Israel and Gaza today. We the believers recognize that lasting peace will only come when we allow the peace of God to enter our hearts. God's peace comes about through a conversion of the heart. This quiet revolution begins with the story of the Annunciation. We believe that something great is about to happen. We look towards Bethlehem and with the eyes of faith we see God's peace coming into the world. Our world is distracted with wars and threats of war. After years of practicing War, we still don't know how to make peace, so we make war some more. We wonder when war and destruction ever lead to lasting peace. The price of peace is too great when we witness death and destruction. We see the innocent being killed. We see great civilizations and cultures being destroyed all in the name of victory. We look towards our leaders and generals to bring us peace and they fail and they fail and they fail. The birth of Christ, the Prince of Peace invites me and challenges me to cross the divide that keeps me apart and to shake hands in peace. I greet those I once called my enemies and now they are my friends.



The greeting between Mary and Elizabeth was a small event but to the faithful ones it announced that the great moment of salvation has come. We are about to give birth. This is a time of vigil and waiting. It is a time for Mary and Elizabeth to give strength and encouragement to each other. This is a time of looking forward. Nothing will ever be the same again. New life is kicking in the womb. It is bursting forth. The valleys and mountains have been made level to prepare the way for the Messiah to come.

With love,  
Fr. Pat