

4th Sunday of Advent. 12/19/2021

Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent, the last Sunday before Christmas. Everything points to the birth of Christ, which are about to celebrate.

In the Gospel today we hear about the meeting of Mary with her cousin Elizabeth. We can sense it is a joyful meeting of two relatives who care for each other. The two women will be supporting each other, offering hospitality to each other, and pondering together the great things God is doing in their lives. Their meeting is also an encounter of the old and the new covenants. Elizabeth symbolizes the hopes and expectations of the people of Israel. God has brought life out of barrenness, and Elizabeth's son is the last prophet of the old covenant.

John the Baptist will be closing centuries of preparation for the day of the Lord with his preaching in the desert.

Mary, she carries in her womb the fulfillment of the Messianic hopes, for the benefit of the whole world. Jesus is God incarnate, who traveled an infinite distance to take flesh from Mary and start an age of Grace. He comes to free us from the slavery of sin and restore our dignity as children of God. This changes everything. All things will be made new. And Mary is already part of a new people of God.

The divine presence that comes to redeem the world is felt by the baby John, who leaps for joy in his mother's womb. It is understood by Elizabeth when she cries out, how is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

For us, how do we prepare in the next few days left before Christmas? We belong to the new people of God through our baptism. Let us thank God all for those who said “yes” to God through history, so that we could celebrate this Mass today, and for the graces we receive. Let us ask Mary, mother of God, for her intercession, that she help us keep the proper sense of awe for how his son changes the world. Let us ask Jesus to open our hearts to the freedom he brings to us, to the peace of forgiveness, to the joy of salvation.

And let us give time to meditate on the mystery of Christ coming in the flesh. That Elizabeth may say of us: “Blessed are they who believed for what was spoken to them by the Lord has been fulfilled”.