

Sunday, December 20, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year B

Introduction

The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Readings

[Luke 1:46b-55](#) **The Song of Mary**

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (*Lk. 1:52*)

[Luke 1:26-38](#)

The angel appears to Mary

Reading: Luke 1:46b-55 The Song of Mary

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52)

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

^{48c}for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great things for me
and holy is your name.

⁵⁰You have mercy on those who fear you,
from generation to generation.

⁵¹You have shown strength with your arm
and scattered the proud in their conceit,

⁵²casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.

⁵³You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,
to remember the promise of mercy,

⁵⁵the promise made to our forbears,
to Abraham and his children forever.

A The Word of the Lord.
C **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Prayers of Intercession

When I say, "Hear us, O God," you respond, "**Your mercy is great.**"

God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world.
Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence is held as we gather our prayers.

Gracious God, all generations call you blessed. In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths. Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creator God, you scatter the proud. Everything we have belongs first to you. Bless and protect the seas, farmlands, mountains, plains, forests, and skies that surround us. Give us humility as we tend them.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Righteous God, you humble the powerful and lift up the lowly. We pray for the leaders of the nations, and of our own beloved nation, the United States of America: Guide all who are entrusted with leadership, to create societies in which all people can flourish.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Compassionate God, you fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. We pause to remember that there are people who are hungry in our own community, and in every community of our land. *pause* When we are warm and full, let our hearts not harden to those who hunger, or who do not have enough work, or who struggle with illness or difficulty. Use our hands and our hearts to show your love.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Healing God, you pour out mercy to all who cry out to you. Surround everyone in need of healing in body, mind, or spirit with your tender presence.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer back to you, whether offerings of ourselves, our time, or a portion of our wealth, that through these gifts, the world might recognize Jesus, God-with-us, and receive your blessing.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Eternal God, you are faithful to the promises you made to our forebears. We give thanks for the ministry of those who have gone before us in this place in service and witness

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey,

✝ now and forever.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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Prayers adapted by Interim Pastor Janet S. Peterman

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