



CONSOLATA SHRINE

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Year A



18th December 2016

Isaiah 7:10-14

FIRST READING

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive.”

A reading from the Book of Isaiah

In those days: The Lord spoke to Ahaz, “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.” And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

The word of the Lord

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 24:1-6

Response. Let him enter; he is the king of glory.

The Lord’s is the earth and its fullness,
the world and all who dwell in it.
It is he who set it on the seas;
on the rivers he made it firm. *(Response)*



Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?
The clean of hands and pure of heart,
whose soul is not set on vain things. *(Response)*

Blessings from the Lord shall he receive,
and right reward from the God who saves him.
Such are the people who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob. *(Response)*

SECOND READING

Romans 1:1-7

Jesus Christ, descended from David, is the Son of God

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the Gospel of God which he promised his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, 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



Alleluia

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son;
and his name shall be called Emmanuel: God is with us.

Alleluia



Jesus was born of Mary who was betrothed to Joseph, the son of David.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew



The birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit, she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.

The Gospel of the Lord

REFLECTION

THEME: GOD IS WITH US by Dr. Scott Hahn

The mystery kept secret for long ages, promised through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, is today revealed. This is the "Gospel of God" that Paul celebrates in today's Epistle - the good news that "God is with us" in Jesus Christ. The sign promised to the House of David in today's First Reading is given in today's Gospel. In the virgin found with child, God himself has brought to Israel a savior from David's royal line. Son of David according to the flesh, Jesus is the Son of God, born of the Spirit. He will be anointed with the Spirit, and by the power of Spirit will be raised from the dead and established at God's right hand in the heavens He is the "King of Glory" we sing of in today's Psalm. The earth in its fullness has been given to Him. And as God swore long ago to David, His Kingdom will have no end (see Psalm 89:4-5). In Jesus Christ we have a new creation. Like the creation of the world, it is a work of the Spirit, a blessing from the Lord In Him, we are saved from our sins, are called now "the beloved of God." All nations now are called to belong to Jesus Christ, to enter into the House of David and Kingdom of God, the Church. Together, through the obedience of faith, we have been made a new race - a royal people that seeks for the face of the God of Jacob. He has made our hearts clean, made us worthy to enter His holy place, to stand in His presence and serve Him. In the Eucharist, the everlasting covenant is renewed, the Advent promise of virgin with child - God with us - continues until the end of the age.

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

Lighting the Fourth Candle of the Advent Wreath

On the fourth Sunday of Advent the last purple candle is lit.

This candle is customarily called the "ANGELS CANDLE" and it represents PEACE.

During this Sunday, the readings lead us to be happy trusting in the realization of the Promise of God, in the coming of Jesus Christ. The source of our Joy is He, and in Him we find strength and real light to our lives.

During this week the father prays:

"O Wisdom, holy Word of God, Jesus Christ, all things are in your hands, come and show us the way to salvation."

The father continues:

"O Lord, stir up your power, we pray, and come; and with great might help us, that with the help of your grace, your merciful forgiveness may hasten what our sins impede. Who lives and reigns forever. Amen."

All of the candles of the wreath are lit.

Since Advent is a time to stir-up our faith in the Lord, the wreath and its prayers provide us a way to augment this special preparation for Christmas. Moreover, this good tradition helps us to remain vigilant in our homes and not lose sight of the true meaning of Christmas.

You can also...

- Light the 1st purple candle (repeat 1st week's prayer)
- Light the 2nd purple candle (repeat 2nd week's prayer)
- Light the rose candle (repeat 3rd week's prayer)

Light the 4th purple candle

Scriptures for your reflection:

Malachi 3:1-5, Romans 8:18-25



EMMANUEL

God with us

God is with us. Emmanuel. Close your eyes, quiet your heart and hear the word pass through your lips and realize what it means.

This is the thing that makes Christianity unique. This is what makes the Christian faith more than a philosophy or a legend. It's what makes it the real deal. This is what renders every other belief in every other god meaningless and a sham.

The Incarnation is the most tender, most revealing, most daring love letter ever written:

"I love you so much. I long for you. You cannot become as I am, so I will become as you are. You cannot reach Me, so I will inhabit you. There shall never be anything between us ever again. Your darkness is now My light. There is no part of you I refuse. I withhold nothing from you."

Jesus came. He shed His robe of glory and put on vulnerable flesh. He became one of us, clothed in our skin and bones and blood and sweat and tears. He blessed and restored our humanity by inhabiting it Himself and closed the gap between mortal and immortal. By taking that mortal flesh to the cross to shed His precious and perfect blood, He bridged the impassable chasm between us and our Creator.

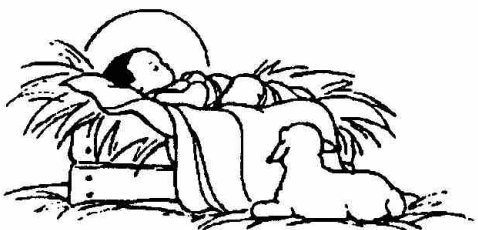
Our God has done the unthinkable, the unimaginable, the impossible, the radical, and the incredible. He came, and He remains. He is with us still. Does a God of anger or arrogance humble Himself and take on the very form of His created ones in order to save them from their own sin? Does a God of contention lay His authority down and subject Himself to the law of the world He created? Does a vengeful God surrender Himself to an unjust death for the sake of those murdering Him?

And still, the world doesn't get it! Still, the reality of Christ's unabashed love for us is not understood. Still, He is with us, unnoticed. Still, we forget the magnitude of what He has done. Still, we are unaware of who He is.

Rejoice! There is no distance between us and our God. We do not stand outside His door weeping, begging for a glance from His furrowed brow, or a crumb from His table. He has demolished the wall between us and carried us inside His house to enjoy everything He has, including the food of Himself.

Our God alone is worthy of praise and honor and awe and obedience because He has left no measure of separation between us and Himself. Out of love our King became our servant. Love compelled the spotless Lamb to become every wretched, repulsive, disgusting sin in order to free us, cleanse us and make us new. Love compelled the Lord who owes us nothing to pay everything to cancel our debt.

There is none beside Him. Only Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us. Nothing in this world is more deserving of our attention, especially this season. Whatever else may be going on, our gaze should be fixed on Emmanuel. We should be looking expectantly at that



manger with grateful hearts. We not only can rejoice, we must rejoice.

Of course, life will go on, and our obligations must be met. Work must be done and should be done. Important current issues must be dealt with and not ignored. But heaven forbid we blow past Advent in our haste, worry and stress, and fail to open our minds and our hearts each day to the miracle of Emmanuel.

Heaven forbid we do not read this love letter. It is an astounding reality our language cannot articulate. It is the summation of our every need; the complete expression of God's desire. The Word made flesh. It's the only word the world needs to hear.

Emmanuel - God is with us! Rejoice!

By Jennifer Hartline - Catholic Online

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The Parish is organizing the Pilgrimage to Holy Land during lent in preparation for Easter. More information will be available very soon.
2. The Family Calendars for 2017 are available at the desk outside the Church and in the bookshop. Get a copy for your loved ones.
3. CWA are requesting from well wishes donation of food stuff to share with families in need this Christmas season. Kindly drop your donation to the parish office during the week. Thank you.
4. Thursday and Friday Priests will be available for confessions from 9 to 12 and from 1 to 6pm; while Saturday they will be available from 9 to 12 and from 2 to 5pm to help us to prepare properly for Christmas.
5. Please note that being Christmas Eve, there will be no mass at 5.30pm coming Saturday.
6. The programme for Saturday 24th evening starts with a film at 7 pm, followed by Christmas Carols and spiritual preparation from 9.30pm. The main mass will start at 11.45pm.
7. Monday 26th Public holiday, Masses follows the Saturday Schedule and the parish office remain closed.
8. Due to the festive season there will be no PMC and Children Sunday Services until 5th February 2017.
9. And finally, on behalf of the Pastoral Team and the whole Parish Merry Christmas.

CONSOLATA SHRINE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Let's use social media to spread God's word.

Remember to "follow" and "like" us.

 @ConsoShrine  Consolata Shrine, Westlands, Nairobi

DAILY READING

Monday: Jgs 13:2-7.24-25; Ps 71:3-6. 16-17; Lk 1:5-25

Tuesday: Is 7:10-14; Ps 24:1-6; Lk 1:26-38

Wednesday: Sgs 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18;

Ps 33:2-3.11-12.20-21; Lk 1:39-45

Thursday: 1 Sam 1:24-28; Ps. 1 Sam 2:1.4-8; Lk 1:46-56

Friday: Mal 3:1-4. 23-24; Ps 25:4-5.8-9.10.14; Lk 1: 57-66

Saturday: 2 sm 7:1-5.8-12.14.16; Ps 89:2-5.27.29;

Lk 1:67-79

SCHEDULES FOR MASSES:

Sunday: 7.30 am **Kiswahili**

9.00 am, 10.30 am, 12.00 noon and 5:30 pm **English**

Saturday: English 7.00 am, 9.00 am and 5.30 pm

Monday to Friday: English 7:00 am and 1.15 pm, 5.30 pm **Kiswahili**

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