

V. 43 translates a Semitic idiom: today Elizabeth might say: How can I be thought worthy of being visited by the mother of my Lord? V. 45 portrays Mary as the model believer: she trusted that God would keep his promise made through Gabriel, preposterous as it sounded.

### The Post-Communion Prayer

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### ~ Notices ~

**Prayers** - If you have any particular issue that you would like to discuss or to be prayed for, do please email the Rector on [frkevinobrien@me.com](mailto:frkevinobrien@me.com) or call me on 065 672 4721.

**Website:** [clareanglicans.ie](http://clareanglicans.ie)

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans](http://www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans](http://www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans)

**Rector:** Email: [frkevinobrien@me.com](mailto:frkevinobrien@me.com) Tel: 065 672 4721

**Advent Wreath prayer:** Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord, merciful and gentle; to you be praise and glory for ever! Your light has shone in our darkened world through the child-bearing of blessed Mary; grant that we who have seen your glory may daily be renewed in your image and prepared like her for the coming of your Son, who is the Lord and Saviour of all. **Blessed be God for ever.**

### - Christmas services -

**Christmas Eve** - Kilnasoolagh Church - 8.00pm

**Christmas Day** - Christ Church, Spanish Point - 9.30am  
- St Columba's Church, Ennis - 11.30am

**Sun Dec 26<sup>th</sup>** - Kilnasoolagh Church - 9.30am  
- St Columba's Church Ennis - 11.30am

### - Mission Sunday -

Donations to:

Limerick & Killaloe Diocesan Council for Mission  
IBAN: IE44OFI9045591214337 BIC: BOFIIE2D

*New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition,  
copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of  
Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All  
rights reserved worldwide. <http://nrsvbibles.org>*

ooOoo



# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent (Year C) 2021

## Readings and Hymns

**Collect:** Eternal God, as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for his coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**Suggested Hymns:** *In conjunction with the online service you might like to view these hymns on YouTube - with internet links and lyrics so that you can sing along:*

- 1) A great and mighty wonder  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MT0XUy0nChA>
- 2) Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6ji4y9Q-K0>
- 3) And now, O Father, mindful of the love  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnZjsEOMVJc>
- 4) Ye watchers and ye holy ones  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYmV\\_Z-iJrc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYmV_Z-iJrc)

### Micah 5: 2-5a

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.  
Therefore, he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labour has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.  
And he shall stand and feed his flock  
in the strength of the Lord,  
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.  
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;  
and he shall be the one of peace.  
If the Assyrians come into our land  
and tread upon our soil,  
we will raise against them seven shepherds  
and eight installed as rulers.

### Psalms 80

Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, ♦  
you that led Joseph like a flock;  
Shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim, ♦  
before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.  
Stir up your mighty strength ♦  
and come to our salvation.  
Turn us again, O God; ♦  
show the light of your countenance,  
and we shall be saved.  
O Lord God of hosts, ♦  
how long will you be angry at your people's prayer?  
You feed them with the bread of tears; ♦  
you give them abundance of tears to drink.  
You have made us the derision of our neighbours, ♦  
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.  
Turn us again, O God of hosts; ♦  
show the light of your countenance,  
and we shall be saved.

### Hebrews 10: 5-10

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,  
'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body you have prepared for me;  
in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.  
Then I said, "See, God,  
I have come to do your will, O God"  
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).'

When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings' (these are offered according to the law), then he added, 'See, I have come to do your will.' He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

### Luke 1: 39-45,46-55

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

And Mary said,  
'My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour  
on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud  
in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

### Commentary

#### Micah 5:2-5a

Micah wrote at a time when the Assyrian army had invaded the northern kingdom, Israel, and when corruption was rife in Judah. The rich cheated and robbed the poor; priests and prophets adapted their words to suit their audiences. In 701 BC, Jerusalem was besieged and Judah became a vassal state of Assyria. The invaders occupied part of the coastal plain, menacing Micah's home city, Moresheth, and the surrounding area. The prophet speaks "the word of the Lord that came" ( 1:1) to him: in 4:9-5:1, he tells of the humiliation and difficulties Israel must experience in the near future. Despite "many nations [being] ... assembled against you" ( 4:11), God will give the Israelites victory over their enemies: this is God's plan. But a time will come when a ruler will arise from the Ephrathah clan of the tribe of Judah (Ephrathah being the area round Bethlehem); he will "rule in Israel" (v. 2) and will be of ancient lineage ("from of old ..."). (David

being from Bethlehem, people understood the lineage to be his; as Matthew 2:5-6 shows, at the time of Jesus, they understood this figure to be the Messiah, the ideal future king, who would bring misery to an end and usher in God's glorious kingdom.) God will "give them up" (v. 3, allow his people to be oppressed) until the right time. The woman in v. 3 is this king's mother. When he is born, oppression will end and all Israelites will be reunited. He will be like a shepherd, feeding his people ("flock", v. 4) through the power and authority of God. He will bring an era of peace. He will rule in Jerusalem (v. 7).

### Psalm 80:1-7

This is a prayer for deliverance from Israel's enemies, calling on God to "shine forth" (smile), be favourably disposed towards his people. God was seen as enthroned invisibly on the "cherubim", the half-human, half-animal winged creatures on the Ark. From the mention of three northern tribes in v. 2 we can guess that this psalm was written shortly before the conquest of the northern kingdom in 721 BC. Vv. 3, 7 and 19 are a refrain: please take us back, God, into the covenant relationship with you! The nation's current plight is seen as due to God's anger (v. 4). Vv. 5 and 6 tell of the present evils besetting the nation; in contrast, vv. 8-11 recall God's gracious hand in the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan. Why, asks v. 12, have you made Israel vulnerable? Please Lord, look after us! Vv. 17-19 seek deliverance: may you be with our king, "the one at your right hand", so we will never desert you (v. 18). Give us strength ("life") to seek favours from you. Be with us, so that "we may be saved" (v. 19).

### Hebrews 10:5-10

In v. 1, the author has stated that the sacrifices offered annually in the Temple on the Day of Atonement (according to Jewish law) foreshadow (point forward to) "the good things [that are] to come" through Christ. He then argues: if the temple sacrifices were "good things", i.e. cleansing of all inner guilt that sin causes, why did these sacrifices need to continue? (v. 2) These sacrifices, he says, did not wipe the slate clean (v. 3); they can't (v. 4). Now, quoting Psalm 40, the author explains that God prefers obedience ("a body ...", v. 5) to sacrifices: doing God's will is what counts (v. 7). In v. 8 the author interprets the psalm. He lists the four types of sacrifice offered in the Temple, offered according to Mosaic "law" (v. 8). Jesus, he says (v. 9), came to do away with "the first" (the sacrificial system) and to inaugurate "the second" (the self-offering of Jesus). It is "by God's will" (v. 10), carried out through Christ, that we have been "sanctified", been made ceremonially clean and been perfected, made complete, through Christ's death on the cross – "once for all" time.

### Luke 1:39-45

The gospel reading precedes the Magnificat, said or sung today. An angel has appeared to Zechariah in the Temple, and later the angel Gabriel has come to Mary. Zechariah has been told that his wife Elizabeth will bear a child in her old age; Mary has heard that she will bear a son to be called Jesus and "Son of the Most High" (v. 32), of God. God will make him a king of David's line; he will rule Israel for ever. Now Mary visits her "relative" (v. 36) Elizabeth. A scholar tells us that the Greek words translated "with haste" (v. 39) can be rendered very thoughtfully. In telling us that "the child" (v. 41, John the Baptist) "leaped" in Elizabeth's womb, Luke intends us to understand that John recognizes his Lord, Jesus. Elizabeth's reaction, empowered by the Holy Spirit, is to praise Mary. Luke's first readers would have recalled the liberation brought to Israel militarily by two women called "blessed" (v. 42) in other books: one in Judges, the other in Judith. Elizabeth "exclaimed with a loud cry" (or voice) – the way marvellous prophecies were given in the Old Testament.