

ADVENT 4

Collect

Gracious God,
you chose the virgin Mary, by your grace,
to be the mother of our Lord and Saviour:
so fill us with your grace,
that with her we may rejoice in your salvation,
and in all things embrace your will;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

1st Reading

Isaiah 7.10-16

¹⁰ Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹² But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. ¹³ Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Psalm

Psalm 80.1-7, 80.17-19

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you that led Joseph like a flock:
you that are enthroned upon the cherubim,
shine out in glory;
² Before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh:
stir up your power, and come to save us.

- ³ Restore us again, O Lord of hosts:
show us the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.
- ⁴ O Lord God of hosts:
how long will you be angry at your people's prayer?
- ⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears:
and given them tears to drink in good measure.
- ⁶ You have made us the victim of our neighbours:
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
- ⁷ Restore us again, O Lord of hosts:
show us the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.
- ¹⁷ Let your power rest on the man at your right hand:
on that son of man
whom you made so strong for yourself.
- ¹⁸ And so we shall not turn back from you:
give us life, and we will call upon your name.
- ¹⁹ Restore us again, O Lord of hosts:
show us the light of your countenance,
and we shall be saved.

2nd Reading

Romans 1.1-7

¹ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ 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.

Gospel

Matthew 1.18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

²² All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'

²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,

²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.