

HOMILY
FOURTH SUNDAY ADVENT
BY THE HOLY SPIRIT
ASST. BY
DEACON BOB BAKER

This has to be one of the shortest 4th Sunday of Advent I can ever remember. But there is still time to prepare!

(pause)

When Mary took all those words into her heart, the first thing she said was. “How can this be?” In other words, she was saying; “I’m only a young girl and I have had no intimate relationship with a man, and no way of imagining how what you say will happen!

Isn’t this our reaction when something unexpectedly happens to us: the 1st thing we usually say is “I can’t believe it!” Doesn’t really mean we don’t believe it, it just an expression or it hasn’t registered in our brain yet. Isn’t this just another way of saying, “How can this be?”

So, can we pause for a few moments and allow Mary’s question to become our own.

JESUS MARY JOSEPH PRAY FOR US ST BENEDICT PRAY FOR US.

Scan the newspapers or sit in a Doctor's office and hear some bad news about your health or worse about your loved one. Find a pink slip in your paycheck after 20 years with the same company. The first thing out of our mouth and without warning is how this can be happening to us or most likely for some of us a lot stronger words might cross our lips

When something in our lives as just been altered or changed, questioning of misbelieves or doubt would be the same!

And when this usually happens, our lives are never quite the same!

So, for us what does that mean "I can't believe it "or "How can this be?"

It doesn't mean we have lost faith!

After being married for a while no matter what you've been told or learned about marriage. There will still be many "I can't believe it or how can this be."

How about learning a complicated new job?

How about these young Priests who have to change parishes every 12 years?

Parents, how about your child going through the adolescent years?

Believe me, I'm one of the worse when things aren't going the way I think they should!

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When some painful or even a wonderful interruption moves into our lives, what are we to say and how are we to respond?

. Like Mary, we may have no idea how we are going to work through these issues of difficulties or opportunities. But the One who made us in God's image is the very one who, is with us in Jesus our Lord.

On this day before the big day, which is only a few hours away, after more than 3 weeks of worship, prayer and longing how can the answer of this question be ignored?

The answer to the question is found in today's Gospel. When Gabriel reads Mary's face and hears her confusion, he says, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you." He reminds us what God says, "I will come among you, empower you, bless you and be with you." God says that in spite of our questions and even because of them

And I say, "How can this be?" ----- How can it not be when we yield our wills to his will and our lives to his life?

The lesson gives way like Mary through our question of faith too confidence in our God.

Yes, reminding us that when life deals us a hand of surprising circumstances, God is with us.

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When Gabriel gave Mary the news, he didn't say, "Good Luck!" to the contrary, he said, "God's spirit is with you and will be with you now and always."

But where does that leave us, when the "How" question does shows up?

I'm reminded that as we strive to be saints that a saint is someone when they fall gets up one more time!

If you're not striving to be a saint, you could be in trouble!

I'm also reminded of when someone spoke a great truth many years ago by noting that when our resources are depleted, God resources' are only just beginning

Then when we get through the "I don't believe and the How can it be"
Our gratitude might be like we heard in the 1st reading when David was caught up in all the Lord accomplished for him and his people and he just wanted to show his gratitude.

But the Lord reminded him as he does us this 4th Sunday of Advent, keep in perspective what we are preparing for and believe!

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I know I am not bringing you some earth shattering news you have not heard before, I'm just reminding you and me as this Advent season is winding down what **Christmas is not** about, -----but what it is!

Remember when we keep Christ in Christmas and in our hearts, what a truly Merry Christmas it will be! AMEN AMEN!!!