

# HOMILY 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY ADVENT(C)

## BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

### ASST BY DEACON BOB BAKER

Today, as we begin this very short Fourth Week of Advent, the readings give us much to reflect on about Jesus – God’s gift to all of us.

And how we dare to follow in his footsteps!

The word “dare” is often associated with risk, danger, and uncertainty. We call those who are known for outrageous stunts “daredevils.” Children like to dare each other. They will often dare each other to peddle a bike without holding on. Which for a child is no big deal, unless they’re going down a curvy hill?

In moments of frustration or anger, one might dare someone to do something bold or risky.

But dare is not often coupled with faith.

For most Christians, faith is a reality into which we are baptized. We receive the sacraments, worship with some degree of regularity, pray, and do our best to relate to others as Christian brothers and sisters.

But to dare anything as a believer may meet us as strange, especially as Christmas nears.

Mary dared to say yes to the angel: let it be done according to God’s will!”

Both Mary and Elizabeth dared to believe the Angels’ good news, God’s promise would come into being through their lives. Such is the mystery and wonder of Christmas!

Also Mary dared to make that long trip to be with Elizabeth

We knew when Mary and Elizabeth meet, the baby in Elizabeth womb leaped. This was actually John and Jesus meeting for the 1<sup>st</sup> time?

Elizabeth and Mary both knew those babies in their wombs were very special and they both dared to say yes to God.

But neither knew what joy **nor the** pain these 2 babies would bring to their hearts. Yet they both said yes Lord your will be done!

Our Gospel lesson shows us another side of Christmas as we stand in the shadow of these two women—one young and one old—who find themselves giving birth to sons who will change their lives and the world as they knew it.

What can their faith and this story teach us about daring faith?

And what would it mean if we dared to believe like them this Christmas 2018?

Now can we dare to believe God has chosen us just as God chose these two women.

In many ways, the entire record contained in the Bible is the story of God choosing human beings to do his work. He chose Noah and his family. He chose Abraham and Sarah, Samuel and Samson, Deborah and Ruth, David and Isaiah, Mary and Elizabeth. The list goes on and on!

**But** is God choosing you? (pause)and **why not?** (pause)

So why wouldn't the God who created the universe and placed his image in every human being not choose us? To think that God stopped calling men and women would be to cancel the work of St. Francis and Mother Teresa and all the other saints who gave their lives devoted to the risen Lord.

Their callings and their devotions were nothing more than their saying a simple "Yes" to God's invitation.

The readings remind us that God was able to work through a very small town, a humble young virgin, an older woman who was presumed to be sterile, and a tiny baby.

This great God – who created a vast universe virtually out of nothing – can also do much in our lives, through our limited resources, time and talents.

The biggest dare we all face today, is to act like Jesus Christ, special in the crisis we are all going through in the church today, that we all have the courage to question and defend those in our Church authority.

Yes we are dared to stay faithful to the teaching of the one true apostolic Catholic Church. Yet, we are challenged to remember we are all human and tempted to sin.

The Hierarchy is not exempt from this temptation. Yes I believe the devil wants their souls especially since he (the devil) can do a lot more damage if he gets to them. It is good that we say the prayer to St. Michael the archangel after every Mass. But that is not enough, individually we need to pray and sacrifice for those in church authority that they dare to stand up and be counted.

So, as we celebrate these next couple days the gift that God gave us through the Incarnation of his Son, let us also pray that we can be gifts to one another and to those whom God **has sent to serve us and us to serve them.**

Let us pray for obedient hearts, that we might always strive to know God's will in our lives and to follow that will.

Let us pray that, like Elizabeth, we might be enlightened by the Holy Spirit, to see God's work in unexpected places and people.

And let us pray that, like Mary, we can give birth to Jesus in our world today – that through us, Jesus can be the Shepherd of the troubled souls whom we encounter in our daily lives. May we at all times, throughout our lives, allow Jesus to do the will of God through us, in whatever big or small way he chooses?

May we dare to do his will!!

AMEN!!!