

FOURTH SUNDAY

Pay attention. Pay attention to the last word in each of today's scripture passages.



Thus says the LORD: You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from of old, from ancient times. Therefore the Lord will give them up, until the time when she who is to give birth has borne, and the rest of his kindred shall return to the children of Israel. He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the LORD, in the majestic name of the LORD, his God; and they shall remain, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; he shall be peace.

Micah 5:1-4

Pay attention.



Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hearken, from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth. Rouse your power, and come to save us.

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Once again, O LORD of hosts, look down from heaven, and see; take care of this vine, and protect what your right hand has planted the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

May your help be with the man of your right hand, with the son of man whom you yourself made strong. Then we will no more withdraw from you; give us new life, and we will call upon your name.

Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Psalms 80:2-3,15-16,18-19

Pay attention.



Brothers and sisters: When Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; in holocausts and sin offerings you took no delight. Then I said, 'As is written of me in the scroll, behold, I come to do your will, O God.'" First he says, "Sacrifices and offerings, holocausts and sin offerings, you neither desired nor delighted in." These are offered according to the law. Then he says, "Behold, I come to do your will." He takes away the first to establish the second. By this "will," we have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Hebrews 10:5-10



Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Luke 1:39-45

From the first reading: **Peace**. From the Responsorial Psalm: **Saved**. From the second reading: **All**
From the Gospel acclamation: **Word**. From the Gospel: **Fulfilled**.

As we make the quick turn from the 4th Sunday of Advent to Christmas, we can get caught up in the prepping and excitement for Christmas. But, perhaps on this Sunday, we need to take a step back. We need to remind ourselves to wait. Yes, the coming is eminent. The arrival of our incarnate God is almost here. But let us not lose sight of the gift of patiently waiting.

The words of St. John Baptist de La Salle in his meditation for the 4th Sunday of Advent remind us to, "probe the depth of our hearts" (Med. 5.3). Let us then pay attention to God's message in these final days of Advent: Peace. Saved. All. Word. Fulfilled. Do not each of these have something to say to us?

Peace: As I await the Prince of Peace, how does God wish to offer me His peace in my life? How does God need me to offer His peace to those around me?

Saved: As I await the Savior, how will I allow God to provide his saving presence in my life? Do I trust in his saving providence?

All: As I await the One who came to redeem all, how is God waiting for me to fully accept his redeeming love? How do I offer this redeeming love to all whom I encounter?

Word: As I await the Word made flesh, how is God asking me to once again let his Word be born in my heart? How is God asking me to give witness to the Word made flesh?

Fulfilled: As I await to remember once again how God has fulfilled his promise, how will I grow in my allowing Jesus to fulfill the desires of my heart? How is God asking me to offer the love of Jesus to others so that they might be fulfilled?

Pay attention. God is already at work and calls us to once again await the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with anticipation and hope. May our receiving of Jesus Christ this Christmas lead us to generously respond to God's love in our lives so that our lives might be a blessing to our Church and world.

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