

WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

Readings: Micah 5:1-4 Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-45	4 th Sunday of Advent December 20, 2009
---	---

Word:	Redemption is at hand for those who are vigilant for the coming of Jesus, the Son of Man.
Theme:	We are vigilant for the coming of Jesus when, like Mary, we do the will of the Father. [Obedience]
Promise:	<i>“Blessed are you who believe that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”</i> (Lk 1:45)

Reflection:

In the 1st reading, the prophet Micah depicts Israel’s political, social and economic situation. Violence is widespread, court judges are corrupt, priests and prophets are busy making money, and an arrogant minority has gained control of agriculture and is exploiting farmers and peasants.

The situation is not unlike that which prevails in our country today. National elections are still many months away, but already political violence, of a scale and magnitude unheard of in the past has begun, orchestrated by powerful provincial warlords whose aim is to demolish political opposition. For decades now, our politicians have been promising us jobs for the poor, better education for the children, eradication of corruption, etc. But we continue to hold the record as one of the most graft-ridden countries in the world. Corrupt government servants wantonly raid the national treasury and fill their pockets with peoples’ money. Thieves and drug-crazed youngsters kill for a cell phone. Illegal loggers denude our forests with impunity; smoke-belching vehicles clog our streets, private citizens blithely ignore traffic regulations as siren-blaring police in motorcycles clear the path through traffic for abusive politicians, even as military and police top brass sell their soul to the highest bidder. This page is too short to enumerate the disgraceful realities we face in our country. And yet, we claim to be the only Christian nation in Asia!

On a lesser scale, our community and families are not exempt from experiencing some form of retrogression too. Perhaps as human beings, we are by nature prone to such wrongful behavior. Such then is our need for “Someone” greater than we are to curb our excesses and bring about change, the development of social conscience, and more importantly, to turn us into a truly God-centered nation. More than 2000 years ago, God, saw our need and sent His only Son, to become a man like us, born of Mary, a lowly, unknown but courageous virgin.

This brings us to the 2nd reading which tells us to reject sacrifices and offerings done for the wrong reasons, usually to showoff, or impress others; deeds done without

genuine interior conversion of heart. The call is for purity of intention and right motivation, for the Lord looks at the heart and judges us accordingly. Jesus and Mary have both shown us the way to glorify the Father. To do the will of the Father entails sacrifice, a dying to self. It calls for the humility of Mary, whom God was able to use because of her simplicity, obedience, and humility. Jesus on the other hand, though God, became poor, and gave His very life for our salvation, in obedience to the Father's will. The question we ask ourselves is - can we be like the man in this Letter to the Hebrews, who said to the Lord: *"I know, my Lord, that you take no pleasure in incense or in the flesh of kids offered up on the altar; I thus promise you another thing; always to do your will."*

In the Gospel, Mary travels to the hill country with some urgency. The journey must surely have been "difficult" for her, and yet she did not tarry. In "haste", she obeyed, trusted and acted upon hearing the Word of God. Mary did not perform any miracles during her lifetime, but she stood witness and was the reflection of a true, obedient and humble disciple of God. She was the vessel used by God to bring forth Jesus unto this world. In the Old Testament King David danced and sang as he carried the "Ark of the covenant" to Jerusalem. In the New Testament, Mary was the "Ark of the covenant". She carried the baby Jesus in her womb, such that John the Baptist leapt for joy in his mother's womb when Mary visited Elizabeth. Even while still in the womb of their mothers, Jesus and John the Baptist already knew each other, foreshadowing the coming of the Messiah, the Savior of the world and John's work as the herald of the coming King. Jesus' coming is truly an occasion of joy, for unto us a child is born for our salvation. Mary's *fiat* to the Father shows us her deep faith in God and her readiness to do His will. She trusted God implicitly and knew that with God, all things are possible. With Jesus, we have hope for a better tomorrow.

Perhaps, it is through the person of Mary, that we too can learn to be a true disciple of God. Like her, we too are the new "Arks of the covenant" as we set out to bring glad tidings to the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed, the sick, the dying right to ends of the earth. As Mary's visit to Elizabeth was an occasion for joy, we too, like John, should leap with joy, for Mary has brought us Jesus. And as we share Jesus with one another, there is indeed, a call for great rejoicing, for Jesus comes with the promise of eternal salvation.

Prayer:

Father God, thank You for the gift of Your Son Jesus. Thank You for the gift of his mother Mary, to whom You entrusted, not only your own Son, but also ourselves. As our mother, we hope for her maternal love to envelop us each day, that we may trust You more, just as she did in her readiness to accept and obey Your will. As she brought forth Jesus, may we like her, be bold and courageous in standing up for Jesus, no matter how difficult it may be, and to continue to trust that You are with us and nothing can stand against Your Word, for all things are possible with You. Glory to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:

1. What hinders me from truly rejoicing in the coming of Jesus into my heart?
2. What stops me from being an “Ark of the covenant”, that is, a vessel to bring Jesus to the lives of other people?
3. What do I resolve to do to fulfill my vocation as a disciple of Christ?

Next Week’s Daily Mass Reading Guide:

December 21, 2009 (Mon):	Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45
December 22, 2009 (Tue):	1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8; Lk 1:46-56
December 23, 2009 (Wed):	Mal 3:1-4, 23-24; Ps 25:4-5, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66
December 24, 2009 (Thur):	2 Sm 7:1-5, 8-11, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79
December 25, 2009 (Fri):	Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Titus 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14
December 26, 2009 (Sat):	Acts 6:8-10; 10:54-59; Ps 31:3-4, 6, 8, 16-17; Mt 10:17-22

“Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!”