

There could be question as to why Mary was chosen to give birth to Jesus. The mother of the Messiah needed to be a virgin to miraculously demonstrate the glory of God. The humble nature was shown in the Lord's birth. The Virgin Mary was a woman of great faith, obeying the will of the Father. Simeon told Mary that she would suffer greatly and that a sword would pierce her soul. Later in St John's Gospel she witnesses the crucifixion of her Son some thirty years later. It could be asked as to why Jesus became a Man: He not only fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament but he also showed the Father, because Jesus is God's revelation of Himself. Jesus came to save mankind from sin. In Luke 2: 10, "there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Saviour." Jesus sympathises with our weakness and secures for believers the hope of heaven. In Colossians 1: 27, St Paul says that God has made known to believers a glorious secret, "which is Christ in you the hope of glory."

-Jane Stilling

Entrance Antiphon: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.

First Reading: Isaiah 61 1-2,10-11

Responsorial Psalm: Luke 1 Response: My soul rejoices in my God.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5 16-24

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! The spirit of the Lord has been given to me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor. Alleluia!

Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

Memorial Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

"At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart? Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God's own love and concern". Mother Teresa



Third Sunday of Advent, Cycle B, 2023 Weekly

Reflection: The prophecies about Jesus: The coming of the Lord Jesus was foretold in the Bible many centuries before He came. There are three hundred prophecies in the

Old Testament, which have all been minutely fulfilled, mainly in the books of Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah. In Isaiah 7: 14 it reads, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and you will call him Immanuel." Again in Isaiah 9: 6-7 it reads, "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing it and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."

This latter passage reveals so much about the nature and character of Jesus, because it lists some of the names by which we know Him. The government of Jesus is not a political one but it is that over our lives. The more God's government increases in the life of a believer, the more peace will increase. If believers do not have righteousness, peace and joy, they are not enjoying the Kingdom of God. In the New Testament, in Luke 1:26-38, the birth of Jesus is outlined. The angel Gabriel visits the Virgin Mary and tells her she is to give birth to a son, who is to be called Jesus. "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, his kingdom will never end." Mary, though troubled, acquiesces and says, "May it be to me as you have said." In Luke 1:46-55, there is Mary's song, known as the Magnificat: "My soul glorifies in the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant."