

4th Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 24

2 Sam 7:1-5,8b-12,14a,16
Ps 89:2-5,27,29
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Monday, December 25

Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10
Ps 98:1-6
Hebrews 1:1-6
John 1:1-18

Tuesday, December 26

St. Stephen

Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
Ps 31:3c-4,6,8ab,16bc,17
Matthew 10:17-22

Wednesday, December 27

St. John, Apostle

1 John 1:1-4
Ps 97:1-2,5-6,11-12
John 20:1a,2-8

Thursday, December 28

Holy Innocents, Martyrs

1 John 1:5 – 2:2
Ps 124:2-5,7b-8
Matthew 2:13-18

Friday, December 29

1 John 2:3-11
Ps 96:1-3,5b-6
Luke 2:22-35

Saturday, December 30

1 John 2:12-17
Ps 96:7-10
Luke 2:36-40

Today's Gospel shows us how the mission of Christ affected the Virgin Mary even before Jesus became human through her.

However, that is not when his salvation plan began. Jesus is God; he has always existed. His salvation plan impacted Mary in the moment of her own conception.

In the Nicene Creed we say that God "came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man." In other words, his Spirit bathed Mary in his pure, holy presence. Even though she could not understand how the Messiah could possibly be conceived within her, by the grace of God's Spirit she could know that God was the one who was asking for it and God was the one who was doing it.

All of us are called by God to carry the presence of Christ and birth him more fully into the world. What are you doing about it? How much are you fulfilling your divine destiny? Remember, he always empowers us to accomplish whatever he asks us to do. God knows what he's doing when he calls us to continue what

Mary began, and he is always trustworthy and dependable. There is nothing to fear, no reason to hold back from fulfilling our true destiny.

Everything that God does is always good, even when his plan



for our mission requires a journey through the cross. If we follow Christ, sooner or later we hang with him on the cross, persecuted for our faith.

With this in mind, when he asks us to do something for his kingdom, of course our answer is yes, right?

Why wouldn't it be? Of course we want to cooperate with his plan. Mary shows us that we can say yes to his plan even when we don't understand it nor see how God could possibly do what he says he'll do.

It's normal to feel inadequate, like he cannot fulfill his plan *through us*, because we know we are weak, sinful, and unqualified. Don't trust your feelings about it; trust God!

Reflect & Discuss:

- † When was the last time you said to God, "But how can this be? You want me to do WHAT? I don't understand why!" What were you afraid of?
- † How strong was your trust in God?
- † When God chooses you for a task or responsibility, what helps you move from uncertainty or confusion or reluctance into saying "yes"?
- † When the plans of God don't make sense or they seem unpleasant, how do you overcome your reluctance?