

# Readings + Fourth Sunday of Advent, year B + December 24, 2023

## Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

## First Reading 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

<sup>1</sup> Now when [David] the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup> the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.”

<sup>3</sup> Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.”

<sup>4</sup> But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup> Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? <sup>6</sup> I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. <sup>7</sup> Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” <sup>8</sup> Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; <sup>9</sup> and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup> And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup> from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel, and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. <sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom shall be

made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

## Psalmody *Magnificat*, Luke 1:46b-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior,  
**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.**

From this day all generations will call me blessed:  
**you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your name.**

You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.

**You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,** casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.

**You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.**

You have come to the aid of your servant Israel, to remember the promise of mercy,  
**the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever.**

## Second Reading Romans 16:25-27

*Paul writes:* <sup>25</sup> Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup> but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup> to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

## Holy Gospel Luke 1:26-38

*Only Luke tells Mary's story, including the Annunciation here. (Side note: the feast of the Annunciation is celebrated on March 25.) Right after this in Luke is the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, Luke 1:39-45, which is our Gospel reading for 4 Advent next year in year C. (Side note 2: the feast of the Visitation is celebrated on May 31). Last fun fact to know and tell your*

*friends: Today's psalm is the Magnificat, Mary's song, which actually comes after both these stories, in Luke 1:46-55.*

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin woman engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And the angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup> But she was much perplexed by the angel's words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will

give to him the throne of his ancestor David.

<sup>33</sup> He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his dominion there will be no end."

<sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup> The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.