

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

December 23 2018

1<sup>st</sup> Reading Micah 5:1-4a, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Hebrews 3:10-18, Gospel Luke 1:39-45

“Bethlehem, from you shall come forth one who is to be ruler...”  
“When Christ came to into this world, He said. “...Behold I come to do Your will.” And Mary said, “Let it be done to me according to Your word.”

If only we might fully understand that Our Lord Jesus Christ is truly our ruler, our guide, one who has total control, and deeply loves each and every one of us, we might then be most trusting in Him.

Mary trusted and traveled, most probably more than 90 miles, on foot (maybe on a donkey or camel if in a caravan) to visit her aged pregnant cousin, Elizabeth. To be sure Mary would not have gone alone but the Gospel does not tell us who went with her.

Elizabeth’s praise of Mary had to be God inspired. For how did she know Mary was pregnant? And how did she know Mary was pregnant with the Lord?

Her praise of Mary “Blessed are you among women...” was reechoed in Mary’s response, “All generations will call me blessed..” Elizabeth continued “And blessed is the fruit of your womb.” Did she really understand how blessed was (is) the fruit of Mary’s womb? Do any of us really understand how enormously blessed is Mary to have given life and birth to Our Lord Jesus Christ?

I believe that Mary did understand and therefore she could say “All generations will call me blessed....” In saying that, she is not patting herself on the back. She recognized how highly blessed is the gift she received for the sake of all humanity.

Some might consider Mary presumptuous by saying “all mankind will call me blessed....” However they forget that Mary not only knew but proclaimed the source of her blessedness. For she went on to say, “For God has done great things for me and holy is His name.” And she began her response to Elizabeth by saying “My soul magnifies the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God my savior.” She showed how much she knew and understood that the Lord was the giver of such great gifts.

Although not on the same level as Mary, all of us have received generous and gracious gifts and blessings from the Lord – our life, our family, our faith, and so much more. How often do we thank the Lord for His generosity to each of us? How often do we thank family and others?

Christmas is a time for gratitude not only for Christ’s being born but for so much more. Take the time to be especially grateful this year.

**Have a Merry, Mary, Christ-mas.**