

Our Lady of Loretto and St Michael, Musselburgh

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Year C



This is what Christ said, on coming into the world:

'You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,
prepared a body for me.
You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin;
then I said,
just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book,
God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.'

Notice that he says first: You did not want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them; and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to obey your will. He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once and for all by Jesus Christ. **The word of the Lord.**

FIRST READING A reading from the prophet Micah

The Lord says this:

You, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
the least of the clans of Judah,
out of you will be born for me
the one who is to rule over Israel;
his origin goes back to the distant past,
to the days of old.

The Lord is therefore going to abandon them
till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth.
Then the remnant of his brothers will come back
to the sons of Israel.

He will stand and feed his flock
with the power of the Lord,
with the majesty of the name of his God.
They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his
power to the ends of the land.
He himself will be peace. **The word of the Lord.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 79:2-3,15-16,18-19. R. v.4)

**R. God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.**

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.
O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help. **R.**

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted. **R.**

May your hand be on the man you have chosen,
the man you have given your strength.
And we shall never forsake you again:
give us life that we may call upon your name. **R.**

SECOND READING A reading from the letter to the Hebrews (10:5-10)

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**Alleluia, alleluia! I am the handmaid of the Lord:
let what you have said be done to me. Alleluia!**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled. **The Gospel of the Lord.**

The Nicene Creed

**I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,

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the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate (all Bow until man)
of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and
glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

'The Word became Flesh and delt among us'

I know that many practicing Catholics find it
difficult to believe in Jesus real presence in the
Eucharist. In a strange way I never have.

I might find it at times a struggle to believe in
God!

I might find it hard to accept that a human being
is the Word of God, the Divine Son.

I might find it hard to believe that Elizabeth could
recognise Mary as 'the mother of my Lord' and
recognise the blessedness of the child she
carried.

But Once I say '**I believe in God...**' then all else
follows.

If the child born of Mary in Bethlehem is **God**
from God, then he can come to us as he chooses.

That he chooses to come to us as the simplest of
food may be surprising but then he always
surprises.

Once you can look at the cross and say my Lord
and my God then the Eucharist should not be so
hard.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC)
teaches that, beginning "**at the moment of
consecration**" (CCC 1377), the bread and wine
offered at Mass "**become Christ's body and
blood**" (CCC 1333).

This is not a metaphor, a symbol, or a spiritual
idea; it really happens. In the Eucharist, "**the
body and blood, together with the soul and
divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and,
therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and
substantially contained**" (CCC 1374).

The Eucharist still appears to our senses as
ordinary bread and wine; but it has been
changed in its substance into the body and blood of
Christ.

This is why Catholics attending Mass are
encouraged to "**convey the respect, solemnity,
and joy of this moment when Christ becomes
our guest**" (CCC 1387); it's why we adore the
Eucharist, "**not only during Mass, but also
outside of it**" (CCC 1378); and it's why the Church
teaches that the Eucharist is "**the source and
summit of the Christian life**" (CCC 1324)

Without abandoning one iota of our reason let us
follow our hearts, let us love Him and adore Him.
Let Him pass through the gates of our mind and
enter our soul, let him come as our food, our
drink, our life, and our love. We however need to
set out believing the promises made to us will be
fulfilled, 'I will be with you always...'

*"The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed
Sacrament is the best time that you will spend on
earth. Each moment that you spend with Jesus
will deepen your union with Him and make your
soul everlastingly more glorious and beautiful in
heaven, and will help bring about an everlasting
peace on earth."* St. Teresa of Calcutta