

Sunday, December 24, 2006
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Fourth Sunday in Advent

FIRST READING *Micah 5:2–5a*

Many years before the time of Micah, God promised David that his dynasty would last forever. Although prophets such as Micah warned that judgment would come from unfaithfulness, Micah foresees a restoration beyond that judgment.

- ² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
 who are one of the little clans of Judah,
 from you shall come forth for me
 one who is to rule in Israel,
 whose origin is from of old,
 from ancient days.
- ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
 when she who is in labor has brought forth;
 then the rest of his kindred shall return
 to the people of Israel.
- ⁴ And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
 in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
 And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
 to the ends of the earth;
- ⁵ and he shall be the one of peace.

PSALM (ELW) *Luke 1:46b–55*

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Luke 1:52)

- ^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,
⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,
⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant.**
 From this day all generations will | call me blessed:
- ⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great | things for me
 and holy | is your name.
- ⁵⁰**You have mercy on | those who fear you,**
 from generation to | generation. R
- ⁵¹You have shown strength | with your arm
 and scattered the proud in | their conceit,
- ⁵²**casting down the mighty | from their thrones**
 and lifting | up the lowly.
- ⁵³You have filled the hungry | with good things
 and sent the rich | away empty.
- ⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,**
 to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,
- ⁵⁵the promise made | to our forebears,
 to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. **R**

SECOND READING *Hebrews 10:5–10*

The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,
"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;

⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

⁷ Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God'
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

⁸ When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), ⁹ then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

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