

# *Dominica IV Adventus A*

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Lectio Divina by Fr. Randy Soto

## I. Lectio

A. Having destroyed the Northern Kingdom (722 BC) the Assyrians began to threaten the city of Jerusalem. Isaiah is utterly confident that Yahweh protects his people and offers King Ahaz a sign. Ahaz trusts more in his army and in his military alliances, but God, nonetheless, gives him the sign: *a baby shall be born*; an heir to the throne and in that baby God will bestow peace on his people. Other than little Prince Hezekiah, based on the Gospels, the Church sees in that prophecy a foretelling of the Birth of Christ, the true *Emmanuel*. The whole Church is invited to learn to put more trust in the Power of God rather than trust in human capacities

B. Ps 24 echoes the joy of having God himself in our midst: *"Let the Lord enter he is the King of Glory."*

C. In the Second Reading, the Apostle Paul summarizes the Christian faith to the community of Rome: this precious piece is at the very base of our Creed: Jesus Christ is both God and Man, and only in keeping both truths together one guarantees the orthodoxy of our faith and the fidelity to God's Word.

D. Our Gospel passage comes from Matthew's infancy narratives. Levi reinterprets Isaiah's prophecy to King Ahaz to reveal to us that Jesus is the *Emmanuel*. Jesus Christ, God's Only Begotten son, is the only venue through which the Lord blesses, not just his people Israel, but the whole world with peace and love. At the end of this Gospel, Jesus blesses the disciples telling them that he will always be the *Emmanuel*, giving everyone all the more reasons to believe in him and to rejoice at his coming.

## III. Meditatio

A. God's Word makes us understand God's greatness and the same time, our insignificance. The irony of today's readings is manifested in the event of the birth of a tiny child: to the world's eyes he is just weak little youngling; hopeless, powerless and someone who totally depends on others to survive. In God's eyes, he is the most powerful instrument of salvation and redemption. To us he is just another one, to God he is the only one; for many he is just a human; to the believer he is both God and man.

B. This irony is none other than our Christian tidings for this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent. The Church rejoices in her faith and announces to the whole world that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. He is the Emmanuel, whom we shall adore at Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.

B. Other themes: Mary (Isaiah); Joseph (Gospel); God with us or *Emmanuel* (Isaiah and Matthew).

### III. Oratio

We begin our celebration by quoting the prophecy of Isaiah: "Let the clouds rain down the Just One, and the earth bring forth a Savior" (*Introit*); then we ask the Lord to fill our hearts with his love in order to celebrate with joy the coming of Jesus Christ as man, who is called the Emmanuel, the God with us (*OP; CA*); Mary was greeted by the Archangel Gabriel as the one who had been transformed by God's grace to be the Mother of God; thus with Elizabeth we proclaim to her: "blest is the fruit of your womb" (*OA*). We ask the Lord to make holy the gifts we place upon the altar with the power of the Spirit, which sanctified the womb of Mary (*PG*). Mary is the model of true Christian love for She: "*bore him in her womb with love beyond all telling*" (*Preface*). We conclude our celebration by calling out to God: "*Lord, make us grow in faith and love to celebrate the coming of Christ our Savior*" (*PC*).

### III. Contemplatio

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us,  
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art:  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,  
born a child, and yet a king,  
born to reign in us forever,  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit  
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788), 1744