

HOMILY FOR 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR C

1. What do we want most in life, what do we pray for
 - a. I don't think it is about wealth and power
 - b. that were most important we would not be wasting our time in Church
 - i. There used to be a time where being seen in church was important to status
 - ii. Now going to church is almost counter-cultural
 - c. More likely we want to make a difference,
 - i. to have significant role in our families, our community our world
 - d. At first might seem that the way to do this is through wealth and power
 - i. Idea that bigger is better, whether cities or companies or farms
 - e. In Scriptures see places and people who seemed unimportant in their time
 - i. Bethlehem is described by Micah as being too small to be among the clans of Judah
 - ii. Elizabeth was old and unable to have children, she felt that she was in disgrace in her society
 - iii. Mary was just a young virgin
2. One of the problems we have with God is that he keeps us off balance
 - a. He does not operate the way we expect him to
 - b. The advantage that the pagan gods seem to give is that they promised a quid pro quo
 - c. People believed that if only they got the rituals just right and found the correct words, then the god would have to give them what they wanted
 - i. This is what magic is all about
 - ii. This is the vision today of power and wealth and size, only if we are big enough, rich enough and powerful enough, can we make a difference
3. God has very different view
 - a. Those things that we hold as important may be worthless in God's eyes, while the small and the unimportant may be the source of salvation
 - b. Elizabeth, whom Mary visits in the Gospel, is granted a child
 - i. This child is John the Baptist who became a powerful preacher
 - ii. He really did prepare the road for Jesus
 - iii. Many of Jesus first Apostles had been disciples of John the Baptist
 - iv. Jesus himself was baptized by John when He began His public ministry
 - c. Micah goes on to say about Bethlehem that from it shall come the one who is to be ruler of Israel
 - d. This is fulfilled in the person of Mary, who in the town of Bethlehem becomes the Mother of our Savior
4. If speak with any minister or priest about preaching, probably how different God's ways are from ours
 - a. I can work really hard and think that I have put together a wonderful homily and will not get any feedback
 - b. On other hand something I said sort of off the cuff without thinking about it, and someone will tell me how much that touched them

- c. God has His way of humbling even preachers
- 5. Faith is really about humility
 - a. When we pray and ask for something, we often do not know if that will be the best thing for us
 - b. We have such a limited timespan, we can only guess what might be best
 - c. Faith recognizes that God has an infinite view, He can see connections between even the smallest events or person that we can never see
 - d. Jesus Himself expressed this humbling
 - i. Garden of Gethsemane, prays to the Father, if possible let this cup of suffering pass by, but your will be done
 - e. In Our Father He taught us to say in same way Your will be done
- 6. Our dreams and ideas of making a difference in world may not be effective
 - a. But if we allow ourselves to be instruments of God we may be surprised at how God will us us
 - b. After all who would have imagined that an old woman, a young virgin and a small twon would change the world?