

## Reflection for 4th Sunday of Advent

When I was a student going round churches and galleries in Italy, I would groan slightly at the sight of yet another representation of the Annunciation, the subject of today's Gospel reading. It was a classic scene of course for religious paintings from the Renaissance era, and any painter worth his salt (and almost certainly 'his') would try his hand at this. I particularly like the version from Fra Filippo Lippi, which is actually in the National Gallery in London. To call these scenes unrealistic is an understatement, as they always contain local Italian countryside, and very clearly contemporary European figures; nevertheless they are more than just charming. There is often an intensity in the interaction between Gabriel and Mary which bespeaks, I think, something of the original encounter.

There is another useful reminder here too While we also hear this Gospel for the Feast of the Annunciation on 25 March, a convenient nine months earlier than Christmas to the day, we most often hear it at Advent and Christmas. And so in these colder and wetter climates, we can get quite the wrong sense of what it was like for Mary. The renaissance pictures may point us back not only to how extraordinary this event was, but that it did not happen here, not even in Exeter or St Thomas. We might allow our imaginations to expand this year!

*Fr David*

### Codes for the Zoom worship at 10.30

These are codes for Sundays from 6 December to the end of January:

**Meeting ID:** 894 0983 2572

**Passcode:** 061920

**Telephone numbers:** 0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196

### NEXT SUNDAY 27.12.20 St Thomas Beckett

**SERVICES** 10.30 by Zoom, 12 noon in Church



#### READINGS

OT Ecclesiasticus 51: 1-8

NT Hebrews 13: 10-16

Gospel Matthew 10: 28-33

#### CONTACT US

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# St Thomas, Exeter

Sunday 20th December 2020

## 4th Sunday of Advent

10.30 by Zoom (phone-in available)

12 noon Mass in Church

Here's the offering for Christmas worship from St Thomas towards the end of this extraordinary year, when we still want to affirm Emmanuel: God is with us.

**24 December**

4-5pm

**Christmas Eve**

Nativity trail for children in the Churchyard

**25 December**

9.30am

10.30am

**Christmas Day**

Mass in Church (Dress warmly)

On-line Service via Zoom, link on the website

**27 December**

10.30am

12 noon

**St Thomas Beckett, co patron**

On-line Service via Zoom,

link on the website

Mass in Church (Dress warmly)



## Collect

God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

## 2 Samuel 7: 1-11,16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.' But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

## Romans 16: 25—end

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

## Luke 1: 26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

## Post Communion

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

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## NOTICES

Revd Sarah is collecting donations and pledges for the Exeter-wide **Ecumenical Christmas Present Project**. This aims to provide all the children in Exeter whose families are using the Food Bank with a voucher for a Christmas present. Cheques to St Thomas PCC please.

There is the possibility of a **Zoom Nativity**. Questions and volunteers to Revd Sarah asap please.

**Community Larder** The Community Larder is now closed until **Tuesday 5th January 2021**. Thank you very much for your generosity.

**Knit and Natter 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020** We shall continue with Zoom meetings on Thursday mornings. 11.15-11.55am, for the time being, thanks to Vanessa for setting this up. As always, we shall move with the times when we know more clearly what we can safely do together. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725

**Pat Mounce** will not be sending individual Christmas cards this year but she wishes everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

