



December 22, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Mi 5:1-4a | Heb 10:5-10 | Lk 1:39-45

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Ask a child, “Where is God?” and you’ll likely receive a variety of responses: “in heaven,” “in church,” “everywhere” and “in my heart” are all conceivable answers from a child’s lips. But the one we most easily write off as silly or sentimental is one that the saints would urge us to revisit more seriously: God is indeed “in my heart” – that is, he is present in our souls! This is true not only when we receive him in Holy Communion, and not only because he is “everywhere,” but because we possess *sanctifying grace*. Grace is *divine life* – God’s life – and if we are “in a state of grace” (that is, we have brought any mortal sins to confession), we have this life within us! Our model for becoming aware of this wonderful gift is our Blessed Mother, whose example in today’s Gospel teaches us to love, reverence, and obey God within us. Setting out “in haste” to serve her aged cousin, Mary carried God in her womb. We can imagine the love and joy with which she carried him. At every moment, God is present in us, too (not physically, but by grace) and we should strive to recognize and love him who has made our hearts his dwelling place.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

The events of today’s Gospel suggest that Jesus’ presence in Mary is not *for* Mary alone. Prompted by love, she made the arduous journey to visit Elizabeth – itself an act of charity. But Mary brought more than her services and support to Elizabeth during a potentially difficult pregnancy; she brought God himself! Mary was so conscious of God within her that even her words, flowing from a heart burning with his love, carried a special power; at Mary’s greeting, Elizabeth was “filled with the Holy Spirit” and John the Baptist “leaped for joy.” As we become increasingly aware of God dwelling in our souls, we, too, become “Christ-bearers” to others. By being lovingly attentive to our Divine Guest, our words and actions become means by which he can act on the hearts of those we encounter each day.

SING

*O come, divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph
And sadness flee away*