

4th Sunday of Advent

Yr. A

Reading 1

Citation: Isaiah, Chap. 7, Verses 10-14
Isaiah 7: 10-14

Ahaz is against prayer! Even when God Himself (through Isaiah) urges Ahaz to petition Him for a sign of coming good fortune (God's Providence) he fails to believe. Isaiah is exasperated with the man and with the Israelites. Almost out of desperation, or at least frustrated, Isaiah promises a sign – the birth of a Savior.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying: (very short pause)
Ask for a sign from the LORD, your God; (very short pause)
let it be deep as the netherworld, or high as the sky! (short pause)

But Ahaz answered, (very short pause)
"I will not ask! I will not tempt the LORD!" (almost angry? insistent) (very short pause)

Then Isaiah said:
Listen, O house of David! (raise volume a bit) (firm)
Is it not enough for you to weary people, (very short pause)
must you also weary my God? (exasperated)

Therefore the LORD himself will give you this sign: (very short pause)
the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, (gentle but very firm)
and shall name him Emmanuel. (triumphant!)

The word of the Lord.

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Reading 2

Citation: Romans, Chap. 1, Verses 1-7
Romans 1: 1-7

Paul's greeting to the Romans (both Roman Jews and non-Jews). He is reminding the Jews of the promises made to them about a savior as well as reminding the Gentiles that Jesus comes as a savior of them, too. Just as importantly, though, he is attempting to establish his credentials as an Apostle to everyone outside of Israel. Although Paul is very sure of himself, he is not arrogant or overwhelming – he respects his audience. In a way, he is attempting to model the behavior that Christ indicated He wanted from us. Be a sincere, humble, confident Paul.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Paul,
a slave of Christ Jesus, (not quite proud; humble)
called to be an apostle (a little more pride?)
and set apart for the gospel of God, (firm)
which he promised previously through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, [parenthetical]
the gospel about his Son,
descended from David
according to the flesh, [parenthetical]
but established as Son of God
in power
according to the Spirit of holiness [parenthetical]
through resurrection from the dead,
Jesus Christ our Lord. (insistent) (short pause)

Through him we have received the grace of apostleship,
to bring about the obedience of faith, for the sake of his name, (disregard both commas)
among all the Gentiles, (vary pace this + next phrases)
among whom are you also, (almost parenthetical)
who are called to belong to Jesus Christ; (short pause)
to all the beloved of God in Rome, (a bit insistent)
called to be holy. (more insistent) (short pause)

Grace to you (a bit softer?)
and peace from God our Father (firm)
and the Lord Jesus Christ. "

The word of the Lord.

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GOSPEL

Citation: Matthew, Chap. 11, Verses 2-11
Matthews 11: 2-11

Matthew's background to Jesus' birth. You are the story-teller. Take your time; let you listeners see the changing scene and the drama of Joseph's dream. When Heaven angel speaks be emphatic and firm (but not loud [Joseph is asleep!]).

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. (very short pause)

When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph,
but before they lived together, (parenthetical)
she was found with child
through the Holy Spirit. (parenthetical)

Joseph her husband,
since he was a righteous man, (parenthetical)
yet unwilling to expose her to shame,
decided to divorce her quietly. "

Such was his intention (Oh, Yes; of course)
when behold, (WOW!)
the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, (very short pause)

"Joseph, son of David, (gentle but firm)
do not be afraid to take Mary
your wife
into your home. (very short pause)

For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. (a bit excited!)
She will bear a son (very firm)
and you are to name him Jesus,
because he will save his people from their sins." "

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: (very short pause)

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, (triumphant announcement)
and they shall name him Emmanuel, "

which means (almost parenthetical)
"God is with us." (slowly, emphatically)

When Joseph awoke,
he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him
and took his wife into his home. (firm; emphatic)

The Gospel of the Lord.

Proclaim the Word!

Proclamation Format