



# TO THE Heights

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

✉ [youthministry@waterfordlismore.ie](mailto:youthministry@waterfordlismore.ie)

Year C

## Sunday Mass Readings

**First Reading:**

Micah 5:1-4

**Responsorial Psalm:**

Psalm 79 (80):2-3, 15-16, 18-19

**Second Reading:**

Hebrews 10:5-10

**Gospel:**

Luke 1:39-45

*"Blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled."*



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## Game Changers

The Catholic Church's Liturgical Calendar is crammed full of inspirational saints, or as we like to call them, Game Changers!

You can check out our other Game Changer resources on our website: [www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry](http://www.waterfordlismore.ie/youth-ministry).

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|--------------------|---|
| <b>20 December</b> | <u><a href="#">St Fachanan, Bishop</a></u>          |
| <b>21 December</b> | <u><a href="#">St Peter Canisius, Priest</a></u>    |
| <b>23 December</b> | <u><a href="#">St John of Kanty</a></u>             |
| <b>25 December</b> | <u><a href="#">Christmas Day, Solemnity</a></u>     |
| <b>26 December</b> | <u><a href="#">The Holy Family / St Stephen</a></u> |



## Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading.  
Don't have a Bible? No worries, click the bible image!



1. Where was Elizabeth living? Why would this be a difficult journey for Mary?
2. Do you think Zechariah would have spoken to Mary when she arrived at his house? Check Luke 1: 18-25
3. Who was the child in Elizabeth's womb?
4. What do you think Elizabeth meant by "Of all women you are the most blessed"?
5. What familiar Catholic prayer do we find Elizabeth's words in?
6. Why was our Lady's visit such an honour for Elizabeth, when she was her cousin?
7. What promises do you think God has made to you?



# Gospel Reflection: BE LIKE MARY!



On this the last Sunday before Christmas, our Gospel reading prepares us to witness Christ's birth by showing us how Jesus was recognized as Israel's long-awaited Messiah even before his birth. The Gospel turns our attention from the ministry of John the Baptist to the events that preceded John the Baptist's birth. The story of John the Baptist and his parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, are reported only in Luke's Gospel. Luke pairs the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus, establishing John's early connection to the Messiah.

Our Gospel reading recalls Mary's actions after the announcement of Jesus' birth by the angel Gabriel. Mary goes to visit Elizabeth, her cousin, who is also with child. Elizabeth greets Mary with full recognition of the roles that they and their unborn children will play in God's plan for salvation. If we were to continue to read the verses that follow in Luke's Gospel, we would hear Mary respond to Elizabeth's greeting with her song of praise, the Magnificat. Both women recall and echo God's history of showing favor upon the people of Israel.

In Luke's Gospel the Holy Spirit helps reveal Jesus' identity as God to those who believe. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and sings Mary's praise because she bears the Lord. We sing these words of praise to Mary in the Hail Mary. Even John the Baptist, the unborn child in Elizabeth's womb, is said to recognize the presence of the Lord and leaps for joy.

It is appropriate in this season of Advent that we consider the role of Mary in God's plan of salvation. Elizabeth describes Mary as the first disciple, as the one who believed that God's word to her would be fulfilled. Mary's faith enabled her to recognize the work of God in her people's history and in her own life. Her openness to God allowed God to work through her so that salvation might come to everyone. Because of this, Mary is a model and symbol of the Church. May we be like Mary, open and cooperative in God's plan for salvation.

Loyola Press - Sunday Connection

"You alone have done great things. I can't boast of anything.  
Mighty one, and King of kings, Jesus." - Matt Maher -

## CERTAINTY IN UNCERTAINTY

In this Gospel passage, we hear about the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, which we remember in the Second Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. It's worthwhile to take a few minutes to contemplate what is going on here. Mary has just conceived God the Son, Jesus, in her womb through the power of the Holy Spirit. Upon hearing that her cousin Elizabeth is also pregnant, she immediately goes to her, a difficult journey across rough terrain in the hill country. As soon as Mary arrives, John the Baptist recognises Jesus in her womb and leaps for joy in Elizabeth's womb! This story can raise so many points for us to reflect on: Can people recognise Jesus in me? Do people respond joyfully to my presence, because of the love I have for them? Do I strive to serve others like Mary? Am I open to God's promises like Mary was? Am I humble? Do I allow Our Lady to help me in my times of need? Do I trust God's plan even when I can't predict the future outcomes?

USE THIS WEEK'S RESOURCE TO HELP YOU!

## TEACHER'S CORNER

**Live Advent Differently:** Daily online Advent Calendar, with practical actions, a short prayer, and a song / video for each day of the Advent Season. Bookmark the page or add to your home screen to access content each day to help prepare your heart well for Christmas. <https://tinyurl.com/AscendAdvent>

**Lectio Divina:** the praying with the Scriptures, led by the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, beginning Thurs, September 30th. 2 options: Thurs @ 2pm in St. John's Pastoral Centre / Thurs @ 7:30pm at Sacred Heart Parish Centre. Please register at [waterford@ascjusus.org](mailto:waterford@ascjusus.org) or call 087-4042785

**Light of the World:** Christmas Carols and Prayers from Glencomeragh House. Holy Family Mission, Sunday 19th December at 8pm. Live-streamed on [www.holyfamilymission.ie](http://www.holyfamilymission.ie)

STORY TIME



Paul Harvey, the Man and the Birds (The Incarnation)

## Young Person's Prayer



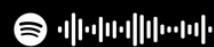
Choose one of the Joyful Mysteries, and reflect on what is happening in that scene. Ask Our Lady to show you how to trust in God's promises like she did. Then pray a decade of the rosary: One Our Father, Ten Hail Mary's and a Glory Be. You can use this Ascend YM rosary resource to help you if you need it!



## TUNE OF THE WEEK

Great Things

Matt Maher



## WEEKLY CHALLENGE:



Be aware of God's Promises in your life! Make a list of the blessings in your life, things or people you are truly grateful for. Think back on situations you were worried about that have since resolved and have maybe even worked out better than you had initially hoped. Adopt an attitude of gratitude this week, especially for the gift of our Saviour at Christmas time!

**WATCH:** [Having Joy in Uncertainty \(Er Mike Schmitz\)](#)



## CHECK IT OUT: MARY'S MEALS

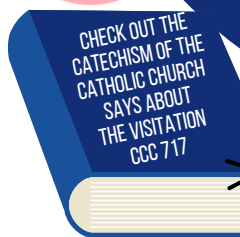
Mary's Meals are a no-frills charity with a simple idea that works: by providing one good meal in a place of learning, children are drawn into the classroom where they can receive an education that could one day free them from poverty. €18.30 is all it costs to feed a child for a whole school year.







LUKE 1:39-45



# Are you certain?



Mary wasn't given certainty. She was given a promise.

*Romans 12:12 "Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times."*

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS SONGS? DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE RELIGIOUS CAROL? WHICH CAROL SUMS UP THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS FOR YOU?



DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE CHRISTMAS MEMORY?

WATCH THIS VIDEO FROM FR MIKE SCHMITZ, "HAVING JOY IN CERTAINTY" (ASCENSION PRESENTS) AND REFLECT ON THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW



- According to Fr Mike, what is the only thing that is certain for us?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Why does he suggest we find comfort in past Christmas memories?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What can we let our lack of certainty about the future steal?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Christmas is a Season of Joy in the midst of uncertainty.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## PUT YOURSELF IN MARY'S SANDALS...



In Luke 1, when the Angel Gabriel visits Mary with the news she is chosen to be the Mother of God, how do you think Mary felt?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## ARE THE "JOYFUL MYSTERIES" REALLY JOYFUL???



- At the Annunciation, immediately after Mary said yes, what did the Angel do?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What kind of things could the Angel have told Mary to take away some of her uncertainty? (List 2 things Fr Mike mentions)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- "All is calm, all is bright...." Was it really? What kind of uncertainty did Mary (and Joseph) face in Bethlehem?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



- In the 4th mystery, the Presentation in the temple, where was the uncertainty?  
\_\_\_\_\_

WE CAN LOOK BACK AT THESE STORIES 2000 YEARS ON, KNOWING HOW THINGS WORKED OUT, BUT THEY WERE LIVING THROUGH THEM.

# ARE YOU CERTAIN?

LUKE 1:39-45



**Even in the darkest times, when we are at our weakest, or suffering the most, when it seems there is no way out, God is \_\_\_\_\_.**

WE CAN CELEBRATE A "MERRY" CHRISTMAS, NOT BECAUSE OF CERTAINTY, BUT BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN GIVEN A SAVIOUR, ONE WHO ENTERS INTO UNCERTAINTY AND HIS PRESENCE IS TRANSFORMING. HE BRINGS JOY TO THE WORLD!



## Now Read Luke 1: 39 - 45



In this Gospel passage, we hear about the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, which we remember in the Second Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. It's worthwhile to take a few minutes to contemplate what is going on here. Mary has just conceived God the Son, Jesus, in her womb through the power of the Holy Spirit. Upon hearing that her cousin Elizabeth is also pregnant, she immediately goes to her, a difficult journey across rough terrain in the hill country. As soon as Mary arrives, John the Baptist recognises Jesus in her womb and leaps for joy in Elizabeth's womb! This story can raise so many points for us to reflect on: Can people recognise Jesus in me? Do people respond joyfully to my presence, because of the love I have for them? Do I strive to serve others like Mary? Am I open to God's promises like Mary was? Am I humble? Do I allow Our Lady to help me in my times of need? Do I trust God's plan even when I can't predict the future outcomes?



### MISSION!

GOD IS DOING WONDERFUL THINGS IN YOUR LIFE - BUT SOMETIMES WE ARE TOO BUSY OR TOO CAUGHT UP WITH FUTURE WORRIES TO REALISE WHAT HE IS CURRENTLY DOING, OR HAS DONE IN THE PAST. MAKE A LIST OF THE BLESSINGS IN YOUR LIFE, THINGS OR PEOPLE YOU ARE TRULY GRATEFUL FOR. THINK BACK ON SITUATIONS YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT THAT HAVE SINCE RESOLVED AND HAVE MAYBE EVEN WORKED OUT BETTER THAN YOU HAD INITIALLY HOPED. ADOPT AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE THIS WEEK, ESPECIALLY FOR THE GIFT OF OUR SAVIOUR AT CHRISTMAS TIME!



### PRAYER TIME!



**Choose one of the Joyful Mysteries, and reflect on what is happening in that scene.** Ask Our Lady to show you how to trust in God's promises like she did. Then pray a decade of the rosary: One Our Father, Ten Hail Mary's and a Glory Be. You can use this [Ascend YM rosary resource](#) to help you if you need it!



## CREATE A PLAYLIST TO LISTEN TO AS YOU REFLECT ON GOD'S PROMISES



- [Great Things - Matt Maher](#)
- [Magnificat - Mary's Song](#)
- [Greater Things - Mack Brock](#)
- [Your Promises - Elevation Worship](#)
- [Light of the World - Lauren Daigle](#)
- [Even the Winter - Audrey Assad](#)
- [When I think upon Christmas - Hillsong](#)
- [Hallelujah, Light has Come - BarlowGirl](#)

Click the links for the YouTube videos to listen to some suggestions!



**God's Ways are not our ways**  
(Fr Mike Schmitz)



**The Visitation (Ignatius Press)**





# My Gratitude List!

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Write a letter of thanksgiving to God for the promises He has made to you,  
and the blessings you have seen in your life so far.

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IN ALL  
THINGS  
give  
THANKS

Begin  
EACH WITH  
DAY (A)  
grateful  
HEART

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Check out the following video resources for Christmas!



# Christmas Playlists

Click the hyperlinks or scan the QR Code!



## CHRISTMAS CAROLS

- [Make Room - Casting Crowns](#)
- [Somewhere in your silent night - Casting Crowns](#)
- [Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth - Crosby & Bowie](#)
- [Adore - Chris Tomlin](#)
- [Noel - Chris Tomlin / Lauren Daigle](#)
- [Joseph's Lullaby - Mercy Me](#)
- [Light of the World - Lauren Daigle](#)
- [When Love was born - Mark Schultz](#)
- [God made Low - Sovereign Grace](#)
- [I heard the bells on Christmas Day - Casting Crowns](#)
- [Christmas Day - Chris Tomlin & We the Kingdom](#)
- [It came upon a Midnight Clear - Norah Jones](#)



- [Hallelujah, the Light has Come - Barlowgirl](#)
- [Joy \(Unspeakable Joy\) - Chris Tomlin](#)
- [Night of Silence / Silent Night](#)
- [When I think upon Christmas - Hillsong](#)
- [O Holy Night - Josh Groban](#)
- [What Child is This? - Chris Tomlin](#)
- [The Little Drummer Boy - For King & Country](#)
- [Silent Night - Andrei Boccelli](#)
- [His Name Shall Be - Matt Redman](#)
- [The First Noel \(Holy is the Lord\) - Hillsong](#)
- [Peace has come - Hillsong](#)
- [Away in a Manger - Pentatonix](#)
- [Newborn - Mercy Me](#)

## CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS

- [The Light of Hope Carol Service from Holy Family Mission 2020](#)
- [Paul Harvey - the Christmas Story: the Man and the Birds](#)
- [The Role of Duty in "It's a Wonderful Life" \(Fr Mike Schmitz\)](#)
- [Simple Christmas - Inspirational Video](#)
- [The Unpleasant Ancestors of Christmas \(Fr Mike Schmitz\)](#)
- [Christmas is a Season: Jackie and Bobby Angel](#)
- [The Real Meaning of Christmas: Jackie and Bobby Angel](#)



- [JOY Story](#)
- [He Came](#)
- [He Came - A Christmas Spoken Word](#)
- [Christmas: A Time for Hope \(Fr Mike\)](#)
- [A Fr Mike Christmas \(Ascension Presents\)](#)

## FOR THE KIDS!



- [Campa Mhuire Mháthair Christmas Special 2021](#)
- [Born is the King - Hillsong](#)
- [Catholic Kids Media: The Nativity](#)
- [Christmas is Jesus](#)
- [Christmas Songs for Kids](#)



- [Away in a Manger](#)
- [Starlight - Monica Scott](#)
- [Jump for Joy](#)
- [Oh what a Glorious Night - Sidewalk Prophets](#)
- [The Star \(Nativity Scene\)](#)
- [Oh what a special night!](#)

