

# FAITH @ Home

22 DECEMBER 2024 | YEAR C: 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Diocese of Waterford & Lismore

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*Celebrating and supporting faith, hope and love in the heart of the family!*

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

## Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

Micah 5:1-4

Responsorial Psalm:

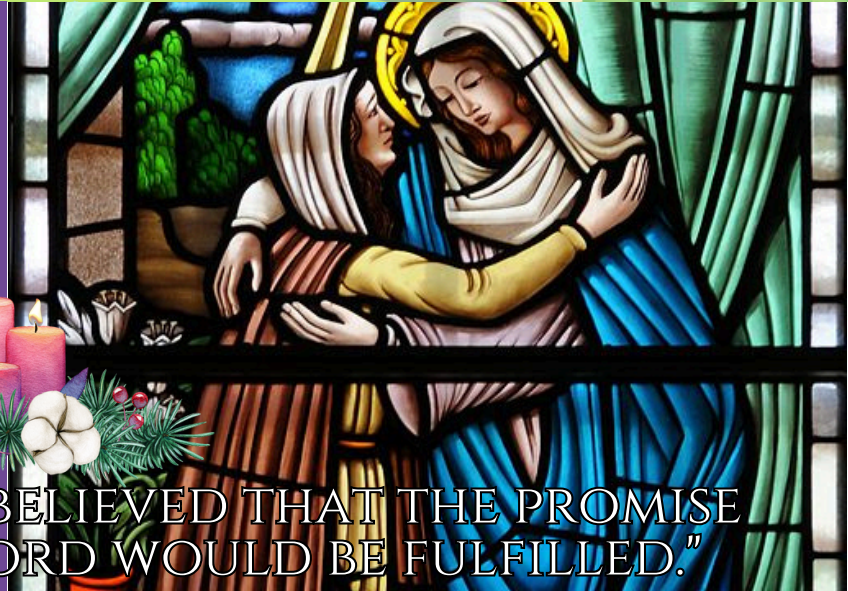
Psalm 79 (80):2-3, 15-16, 18-19

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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## Hear



Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings [online HERE](#).

## Pray

In the Gospel today we find ourselves at the house of Elizabeth and Zechariah, the scene of the Visitation.

Take some time to reflect on the key message of this week's Gospel. Think about the following:

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- What is my relationship with Mary like? Do I welcome her into my heart and my home? Do I turn to her in moments of need? Do I accept her motherly love and intercession?
- Do I believe like Mary and Elizabeth in the promises the Lord has made for my life? Are they a source of joy for me? Am I as excited to greet Jesus as John the Baptist was in Elizabeth's womb?
- Ask Our Lady to guide you in prayer this week, to be like her and learn from her.

## Family Prayer



*Lighting the 4th Advent Candle: All-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen*

[www.xavier.edu](http://www.xavier.edu)

## Talk

Christmas is almost here, but we still need to wait a little longer! Our Lady can teach us how to wait - imagine, she carried Jesus for nine months in her womb waiting to meet Him as a tiny baby!

Discuss the following as a family:

- Can you remember a time when you heard news that made you really happy? What news did you get? How did you react?
- Why is Our Lady so blessed? What special role did God choose for her from all time? Can you imagine what it was like for Our Lady to know that she was carrying the baby Jesus, God the Son, in her womb? How do you think she prayed and spoke to Him?
- Can you be like Our Lady this week, and help others who are in need, rather than focusing on the things you want to do? How can you bring Jesus to others, like Mary did when she visited Elizabeth? How would others recognise that you carry Jesus in your heart?

## Family Challenge!



Pray the second Joyful Mystery together, the Visitation, as a family. Let everyone name an intention that they want Our Lady to intercede for. You could even pray along with this [Campa Mhuire Mháthair decade](#).

## 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](#)

Check  
this  
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. €22 is all it costs to feed a child for a whole school year.



## CARLO'S CORNER

### 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?

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!



Having Joy in Uncertainty (Fr Mike Schmitz)



TUNE: Great Things (Matt Maher)

*To the Heights Youth Resource also available*



Why not watch the  
Campa Mhuire  
Mhathair Christmas  
Special Together on  
youtube?

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