

## 4 Advent C

On this last Sunday of Advent we enter a transition period in the story of Christ's birth looking at two women chosen of God to bear two special children. Luke gives us a contrast between Mary, the young mother to be and Elizabeth, the old woman whose untimely motherhood is six months further along. These women are cousins and they share their pregnancy with great excitement.

Luke tells us:

Both women are filled by the Holy Spirit! The young girl Mary whose child is conceived by God, the old woman Elizabeth is filled by God at Mary's greeting.

Both women experience that all things are possible with God!

Both are blessed with children at extraordinary times of their lives!  
Imagine your first child at retirement!

Both women say a blessing: Elizabeth blesses Mary and Mary in turn blesses God in the Magnificat!

Furthermore Luke contrasts Mary's status to that of Eve in Genesis. When Elizabeth says, "And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?" we can not help but remember that Eve, the First woman, was called "the mother of all living (Gen. 3:20)." And Mary, known figuratively as the Second woman, is the mother of the Lord, the one who created all things.

According the prophet Micah, the Lord to be born is the Ancient of Days. He is a shepherd who feeds his flock. He is the one who enables the flock to live secure. He is the one who shall be of peace and the one who will accomplish what all the offerings for sin could not according to the Hebrews reading.

In keeping with Luke's contrast of the two women, Jesus the Second Man, born of the Second woman, Mary, makes his people holy. The First man, Adam, could only bring sin and death. Our second reading says this Second Man, Jesus comes to abolish the first order so that the second order can be established. The second order of living under Jesus' command is measured by holy living. The first order of

living under Adam could only keep account of sin every time someone broke the law.

Mary in no way understood to whom she was about to give birth – how could she? There were no written scriptures as we have read, to help us piece the meaning of Christ's coming.

Yet, she praises God because she understands simply that being a lowly servant she has been blessed and her status elevated forever.

She goes on to praise God for his mercy...his strength...his justice...in dealing with the proud and powerful and the rich who subjugate the lowly.

She praises him for feeding the hungry and remembering his promises to his people.

The coming of Jesus Christ today means the same thing it meant in Mary's day.

God will turn life upside down and right side up.

God has not forgotten us though so many have waited so long – he will come.

God will make right the injustices of this world.

God will bless those as he did Mary, who believe his word and give birth to his promises. AMEN