

Fourth Sunday Advent -C 2018
Micah 5.1-4///Heb. 10.5-10///Luke 1.39-45

→our Advent journey ends this weekend with a distinct shift in focus from what we have been hearing for the past few weeks.....we move from the ministry and message of John the Baptist...

→to the meeting of his mother with Elizabeth

→and today's Gospel reading provides an intersection of these two stories of birth...that of John and that of Jesus

→recall that the gospel readings over the past three weeks.....our journey this Advent has led us to consider:

the coming of the Lord,

the word of the Lord,

the way of the Lord...

and now on this last Sunday before Christmas, we hear a gospel passage that points to

the promise of the Lord.

→and what is this *precious promise* soon to be wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger?

→Who is this person that the prophets foretold and before whom shepherds will bow?

→well our Gospel today reveals this promise and invites us to revel in its mystery....*its mystery....*

→mystery...is a strange word [when you think about it]...it means: a matter that remains unexplained or a secret...something that is hidden and beyond understanding

→we speak often of the “mystery of faith”....and we try to make sense of the many mysteries that confront our lives.

→and life is loaded with mysteries...isn't it?

→things that are unexplained, or hidden...beyond understanding until someone, or something, or some event uncovers the mystery...uncovers the secret...uncovers the meaning

→...and makes sense of everything

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→life is often full of mysteries

...inventors have always been able to see beyond vision of many

...artists can look at a canvas and see a beautiful painting

...a developer can look at piece of land and see a shopping center....a farmer can look at the same land and see crops...and Jack Nicklaus can look at same land and see a golf course.

→well in today's gospel reading the exact same kind of phenomenon is happening.

→the question asked by Elizabeth, "and how does this happen to me...that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" indicates that she saw what others had not yet seen...

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→Elizabeth is one of the first people to “see” the mystery of the incarnation...the coming of the Messiah

→when Mary arrived...Elizabeth sees what others had yet to see...all because of her faith and her belief

→the woman who greets Mary today was one who had fostered her vision of faith

→she was able to recognize the presence of the Lord not so much because she had 20/20 vision,
but because she looked at life with, through and in the eyes of faith

→and I believe that is what the gospel reading is all about today

→I believe that is what faith is all about

→the ability to recognize the presence of God among us

→the ability to gain a vision, to realize the presence of God among us and to incorporate that
presence into our lives.

→Christmas is very much like this situation in Gospel....it is very easy to see and experience the
Christmas season, the Christmas spirit, the Christmas joy and still yet miss the Christmas message
to miss the point, to miss the purpose of Christmas

→[and] very simply put, that remains the challenge before us today in the gospel...to see what is
really before our eyes

---to see what really is going on

---to see what really this holiday means

---to truly uncover the mystery

---Elizabeth saw what others missed

→she saw the deeper meaning of Mary's visit

→and now...in these last hours before celebrating Christmas perhaps it is also time for you
and me to see exactly what Elizabeth saw

→the true meaning of what Christmas is all about...so that our heart this

Christmas will truly be filled with hope and joy