

**4th Sunday of Advent (Cycle C) Homily  
St. William, Champion | December 19, 2021  
Mi 5:1-4a | Heb 10:5-10 | Lk 1:39-45**

**Deacon Robert Mintus**

What are you waiting for at Christmas? How do you want to spend it? I think for most of us, Christmas is about being with the people we really care about, people who mean the most to us. Often, our loved ones may not appear to be important to others, but they are significant to us.

Today we recall the story of the Visitation. Mary, who was a young girl of fourteen years, and had just been visited by the angel, goes “in haste” to be with her cousin Elizabeth, who is well past the usual child bearing age, yet is in her sixth month of pregnancy. While neither of them is considered to be important, their future sons will change the world. As soon as Mary arrives at Elizabeth’s home, there are signs of how special their sons are, as John recognizes Jesus while they are still in the womb. Luke tells us that Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months – perhaps staying until John was born - before returning home.

We often speak of Mary as the perfect disciple, because most everything about her points to Jesus. On this final Sunday of Advent, there are several things we can see in her story that we can learn from.

First, Luke tells us that Mary had a sense of urgency about her. As soon as the angel left her, she immediately went to be with Elizabeth. The good news she had received was meant to be shared. In much the same way, there is a sense of urgency as we worship today. Jesus is coming soon. Last week we were charged with being ready for him, to get rid of anything in our lives that could prevent us from receiving the Lord, to make a straight path.

But it's important not to let that sense of urgency get confused with the pace of the world around us, one that is fixated on how many shopping days are left and how much there is to do and buy so that we have the "perfect" Christmas. Instead, we might focus on how much time we have left to get ready to receive Jesus.

Second, Mary's story reminds us about the importance of believing. Elizabeth testifies to this when she says, "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." Sometimes we have to face our own hesitation to put our trust in the good news. So often around us we are bombarded by messages from our Western culture that direct us to focus on and put our trust in material possessions.

Finally, Mary teaches us that Christ is the perfect gift. Luke says nothing about any gifts Mary brought to her cousin Elizabeth. Instead, Mary carried Jesus within her and through her trusting presence, revealed Christ. By our actions over the next coming days, we also can reveal Christ to others – in our greetings to others and in our decisions about what we need to buy. Likewise, we are challenged to be fully present when we listen to God's word as well as when we receive Him in the Eucharist.

Let our time gathered in prayer today...these readings...and Eucharistic meal shared together, remind all of us of what we, as

Christians are truly waiting for this Christmas. May we then imitate Mary as we get ready to go forth and receive our newborn king allowing Him to be God with all of us. Let us show Him that He matters in our lives and *gift* that presence onto others.