# “The Promise of the Messiah”

Today, is the forth Sunday of Advent. This week we enter the final phase of the Advent season. On the 17th of December, we enter the countdown of 8 days or octave to Christmas. The countdown is marked by the “O antiphons”. Our readings point us to the promise of the Messiah that would come and save us. He is the new Adam who came to restore all things and reconcile us back with God. As the true and perfect man, He had to take on the flesh of humanity. He could have come in a grown human form, but He chose to come as a baby.

My sisters and brothers, yes, the Son of God could have come in the same fashion as He appeared in the image of human form just as He did with the patriarchs and prophets when He accepted the hospitality of Abraham and ate the food prepared for Him, or when He wrestled in a contest with Jacob. But those appearances were only signs that one day, He would take on the form of a human being and come as a baby needing to be taken care of like any new born baby and would grow up through all the stages humans go through before becoming an adult so He could start His ministry. For the first 30 years, his identity was hidden from the world.

As we are getting ready to celebrate His coming, let us take an adventure through our readings to see how He had told us of His coming. Our first reading told us where He would come from. Through Prophet Micah, God told us that Bethlehem a small insignificant village in Judah at the time, would be made the most significant hub of Christianity because that is where the one whose origin is of old, who existed before the beginning of time would be born. He would be the one to rule Israel.

When we read the Hebrew Bible (The Old Testament), through the lenses of the New Testament, we would see how God had been revealing His plan for our salvation to humanity in stages. It is like peeling an onion layer by layer. Though it might be painful while we peel the onion, when we are eating the dish prepared using the onion, it would be flavorful and we would forget about the pain we suffered while peeling. So it is with God’s plan for our salvation. In the Hebrew Bible, God hid His plan implanted in the life story of the Jews. He wants us to really search for Him. What is easy to find, is not cherished as much as what we have to search deeply for.

For our salvation, according to Micah, God made His plan with His Son and then left us to our devices and stubbornness. God allowed us to be led astray by our sinful desires and pleasure, to be intoxicated by unruly passion until the appointed time when the chosen woman, Mary would bear a child who would draw all people to Himself so that those who act according to His commandments, would be saved and His greatness would be known throughout the earth. He would be called Prince of Peace and Lord of lords. His kingship and dominion would be forever.

In the Letter to the Hebrews, God informed the people that their sacrifice and holocausts offering were not good enough until they have a change of heart. Until they give up their sinful ways and follow His ways. Knowing humans, that their hearts are made of stone, which impels them to sin, God planned an era of holiness by sending down His Son to take up human flesh. It was obvious that we could not enter God’s kingdom by our own power and that it is only through the power of God that we could enter into God’s kingdom. It is only in the Son of God who is sinless that we can find holiness.

When our wickedness had reached its climax, and death and suffering seems to be inevitable, God did not show hatred for us, or reject us, or take vengeance. Instead, God showed His power, kindness, and mercy by sending down His Son who came to do His will so we could gain adoption and become children of God. His Son came to teach us how to do the will of God. Jesus came down to reconcile us to God. He is the mediator of the New Covenant and it is in Jesus Christ that we have redemption through the offering of His blood once and for all. Our good God, gave is only Son as the price of our redemption.

In our gospel reading, we are introduced to the turning of the wheel of our redemption.

We are introduced to the aftermath of the Incarnation. Mary filled with the Holy Spirit set out in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth. On her arrival, we found out that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit at the presence of the Incarnate Son of God. It is the representation of the Old and the New Covenant. One is an elderly woman who would give birth to the last of the Old Covenant Prophets. While the other is young and would have a child who would bring about the salvation of the world.

At the sound of the voice of Mary, by his leaping in the womb of Elizabeth, John began to be a witness to the prophesy of the Angel’s revelation. Because at the presence of the Son of God, John was filled with the Holy Spirit. John recognized the Messiah even in the womb. John’s action meant that the Child in the womb of Mary was not an ordinary child but the Son of God. Elizabeth’s proclamation in a loud voice, also points to the uniqueness of the Child in Mary’s womb.

As Elizabeth said, **“Mother of my Lord,”** implies the kingship of Jesus, as Messiah and that Mary is the King’s mother. This also implies that Jesus was Lord from the beginning of His existence in the womb of Mary. And because she conceived and gave flesh to the King of kings who would be enthroned for eternity, she is the mother of God forever.

As we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us give thanks to our God who took up flesh like us so we can be saved.