

# Fr. Rito's Homily

For the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2017

**8:30 AM (in English) and 12:15 PM Mass (in Spanish)**

God is faithful and fulfilled his promises. Today, in this Gospel of the annunciation, we hear that God, in the Old Testament, has fulfilled the promises made to the patriarchs, kings and prophets.

God promised to his people a perfect, merciful, and kind King. In Mary, favorite daughter of God, pure and preserved from the stain of original sin, God, in his Son Jesus Christ, revealed himself to the totality of love.

God's plan is fulfilled in the chosen people of Israel. The history of salvation is present in Zacharias, as a priest who exercised his ministry in the temple and as father of John the Baptist; also, in Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias who recognized Mary as the Mother of the Lord and congratulated her for having believed in the word of the Lord; in Simeon and Anna, who prophesied the mission of the Messiah. All of them made contributions so that the promises of God could become true among us.

Today, on this fourth Sunday of Advent Season, Mary is the special figure. Advent is fulfilled in her totality in the Divine Maternity of Mary. Mary is the incomparable woman, because she waited for the Messiah with a pure heart and a pure soul.

In addition, she was the only privileged person to carry the Son of God for nine months in her womb and after the birth, she shared Him with the world. Thanks to Mary the Word of God became flesh, and he established his dwelling among us. Mary received the Son of God in her womb because she was filled with the grace of God.

In Mary, God was overflowed in grace and love, because no other person on this world benefited with a single privilege by God, as it happened with Mary. The example of Mary encourages us to prepare ourselves well so that Jesus may dwell among us.

As Christians, we must recognize that only from the hand of our Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may come to have a perfect knowledge of Christ. God wanted, through the Blessed Virgin Mary, to offer us the Emmanuel God, to be with us.

Mary believed, loved and received the promises of God, fulfilled in her Son. Mary is a model of Faith for all, because she committed herself to God, saying: "behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done in me, according to His Word."



Mary is a model of love, because she prepared her heart and life for the mission of the Son of God. Mary, from the moment of the Incarnation until the last moment on the Cross, knew how to accompany her Son. She teaches us how to fulfill the promises of God in our lives. Mary gave us the greatest gift: she brought to us the author of life. Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, brought to us the redemption of our sins and eternal salvation.

For you and me, to celebrate Advent and Christmas is more meaningful than giving gifts. Today, we celebrate the gift of love. God is great, but nevertheless, he becomes small because of his love and offers himself as a weak, vulnerable, helpless, smiling, and full of tenderness.

If you and I believe in this mystery of love, then Jesus will come back to incarnate and be born among us.

Our faith in Jesus, commits us to share the gifts from the child God with others. For example: the gift of listening without interrupting a conversation. When we listen to others, we are making solidarity with the problems and the concerns of the people.

To share the gift of love with others: be generous with hugs, kind words to show the love of Jesus for our families and friends. The gift of recognition to others: recognize faith, joy, love, and all the good things that the people, whom we love, have. The gift of gratitude: giving thanks to God for saving us and loving us. Thank God for the gift of Mary.

The presence of the mother of God is the most wonderful gift, we have in our lives: thanks to the people who daily share our feelings, sorrows and joys.

Happy are those who have a pure, simple and poor heart because Jesus is with them. Happy are those who feel the need of Jesus, because Jesus can be born in their lives. Let us, together on this time of Advent and Christmas that Jesus, as a child, stay to live with us.

May the patriarch Saint Joseph and the loving presence of the Virgin Mary teach us to stand firm in faith in Jesus Christ, true God and true man. Jesus is the only savior of all human beings who love him, adore him, and serve him. Our response depends on our heart and on our life.

Let us ask the Lord to grant us the humility of Mary, to discover the paths of salvation in our daily life.

Fr. Rito's Homilies are on our parish website:  
[www.EmmausParish.org](http://www.EmmausParish.org).

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