

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT; Cycle – C; Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> 2024**  
**Micah 5:1-4; Hebrews 10:1-10; Luke 1:39-45**

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

The fourth Sunday of Advent is the conclusion of this great Season, which is dedicated to Mother Mary. This year, the gospel passage taken from Luke illustrates the meeting of Mary with Elizabeth. Apparently, there isn't anything extraordinary in the meeting of these two village women; but they would not remain in that status for long; for they were both *specialy chosen by God* to play a unique role with God for the salvation of mankind. They were chosen by God, not because they had any outstanding talents or intellectual capabilities more than any other women in their village had. But God had seen from eternity, two fittest instruments in Elizabeth and Mary to bring forth the greatest of all Prophets, **John the Baptist and the Savior of the world Jesus Christ.** It is amazing to notice that God had only an old barren woman to choose to be the mother of John. Instead of choosing any princess from the palace, God selected a village girl to be the mother of His Son, who would be the long awaited Messiah. We may wonder what special qualities God found in these women!

We have an interesting passage in the first Book of 1 Samuel chapter 16, where Samuel reaches the house of Jesse, by the command of God, to choose a king in the place of King Saul. Naturally, Samuel had some ideas about the look and qualities of a kingly candidate. When Samuel saw Eliab, the oldest son of Jesse, he thought that he was the right person. But God warned Samuel: **“Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the Lord looks into the heart.”**

To Samuel's surprise, God chose David the shepherd boy to be the king. Yes, this is the answer for the selection of Elizabeth and Mary by God. Man sees only the appearance, but God goes beyond that and sees the inner qualities and beauty of a person. From the very beginning of mankind, God always defeated the human criteria in choosing someone for his mission. In a way we can say that, God picked up the stone rejected by the builders and placed it as a corner stone of the building. **Whenever God decides to choose someone, what He looks in him/her is not how outstanding his/her virtues or talents are; rather how co-operative he/she is to God's plan.** That was the quality of these two women. Once God chooses somebody, it is God who gives the qualities and abilities needed for that person; rather his/her full 'yes.' Please, listen to the words of Mary to the Angel, **“Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).**

In today's gospel, Mary's gesture towards Elizabeth is a clear sign of her humility and willingness to serve. She served Elizabeth for three months, may be till Elizabeth gave birth to John. Even in the whole public life of Jesus Mary is not seen anywhere in limelight. If we take the four gospels together we find Mary only three times in the scene during the public life of Jesus: first *at the wedding of Cana, when the bridegroom's family was in trouble*; second time *when Jesus was in trouble being accused of casting out demon by the power of Beelzebul* and the third time, *we see Mary at the foot of the cross on Calvary, again to comfort her son.*

From the life and example of Mary, it is clear that God can choose anyone to accomplish a mission. And also the call of God is not meant for a few selected ones. We may think that only great men and women have a call from God and others have just to live a life and go away from this world. In fact no one is exempted from the call of God and each one of us is given a specific mission to accomplish. Our role may not be like that of Our Lady or St. Joseph. It may be a lot smaller than the great things done by the Saints. God gives us a task according to each one's life situation and abilities. The very purpose of our life itself is to accomplish something here on earth for God. Our first call came at our baptism and that day Jesus chose us to be his disciples and there itself he has entrusted a mission upon us. Once we recognize and accept our mission it is God who acts through us. Then we become the Instruments in the hands of God. So we should not give any excuses that we are not able to do this or that. We all can do something beautiful in this world provided we co-operate with the plan of God. It is very important that we recognize *'that something'* and accomplish it.