

## Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

I will make you a house.

*First Reading*

Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages.

*Second Reading*

'The Lord is with you.'

*Gospel*

Let us pray, as Advent draws to a close,  
that Christ will truly come into our hearts.

Lord, fill our hearts with your love,  
and as you revealed to us by an angel  
the coming of your Son as man,  
so lead us through his suffering and death  
to the glory of his resurrection.

*Old Opening Prayer*

This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:

2 Samuel 7:1-5,8-12,14,16; Psalm 88 (89); Romans 16: 25-27; Luke 1:26-38



© John Collier, *Annunciation* (2000)  
St. Gabriel's Church, McKinney, Texas

'The power  
of the  
Most High  
will cover you  
with its  
Shadow'

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**ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM**



Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Year B, 24th December 2023

## Son of David

This year, the Fourth Sunday of Advent is swallowed up in Christmas Eve. Perhaps we can celebrate it early so as not to lose the riches of this final week: the Lord is very near.

In our **First Reading**, God does not allow David to build him a physical house but promises rather to build him a house, a dynasty, that will last forever.

The **Psalm** reinforces this promise, and emphasizes God's Fatherly love and faithfulness.

St Paul, in the **Second Reading**, tells of how God's mystery, kept secret through the ages, has now been revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

In the **Gospel**, the well-loved narration of the Annunciation to Mary, we note how the angel emphasizes that her Son will be of the House of David. Mary willingly agrees to be part of God's plan.

Tomorrow is Christmas Day: may we hold out our suffering world in yearning to the Prince of Peace.



### Opening Prayer

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts,  
that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son  
was made known by the message of an Angel,  
may by his Passion and Cross  
be brought to the glory of his Resurrection.

## Second Reading Romans 16: 25–27

**G**lory to him who is able to give you strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of the mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

I come to my place of prayer and take the time to become aware of God's presence.

I breathe in God's love that surrounds me at all times.

I rest in this love.

When I am ready, I read the text slowly.

With St Paul, I marvel at the revelation of God's love, his covenant down through the ages. I give him thanks and praise.

The mystery is revealed in Jesus Christ, made man for us.

I spend time pondering this amazing act of love, that I am going to celebrate in a special way tomorrow.

How can I prepare my heart to receive Christ?

I listen to what he may have to say to me.

I spend some time thinking of others:

praying for my loved ones and my community,  
remembering all those suffering through war and violence,  
asking the Lord to bring peace to this world that he has loved so much,  
and for myself ... asking for the strength to live the Good News.

I end my prayer thanking the Father for sending us his Son, and I say a slow 'Our Father'.

## Gospel Luke 1: 26–38

**I**n the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid: you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you,' the angel answered, 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary, 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

I light a candle, maybe my fourth Advent candle, and sit quietly.

I breathe slowly, becoming aware of how I feel ... perhaps excited ... or maybe very weary.

The Lord is very near. I draw close to him, aware of his faithful love.

I take up the well known text of Gabriel's annunciation to Mary.

I read it slowly, taking in its freshness and immediacy.

I ponder how Mary feels and reacts. How does this touch me?

The angel says '*Rejoice*', but also '*Do not be afraid*'.

How do I respond to these words today?

In what ways can I rejoice in the birth of Jesus, and also spread joy around me?

I speak to the Lord from my heart and I bring all that may be troubling me. '*Do not be afraid*'. I think of Mary's faith and generosity and maybe ask for some share in this.

I end my prayer in a spirit of gratitude with a 'Glory be ...'