

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent B

Story: It was Christmas time; the four-year old Tim asked his mom if he could get an iPad as Christmas gift. The mother told him to write a letter to Baby Jesus. So he took a sheet of paper and wrote: "Dear Jesus, I have been a good boy **always**, please send me an iPad for Christmas." Then he read it and said to himself, "that it is not true." He tore that up and took another sheet and wrote: "Dear Jesus, I have been a good boy **sometimes**, please send me an iPad for Christmas." But he knew that too is not true. He ripped that sheet of paper too and wrote again on another, "Dear Jesus, I will be a **good boy**." When he read that, he did not feel comfortable. So he tore up that paper, too. Then he went for a walk in the neighborhood. He came to a church where there was the nativity scene displayed. He took the statue of Mother Mary and hid it inside his overcoat and returned home. He went up straight to his room and hid the statue under the bed. Then he took a sheet of paper and wrote, "Dear Jesus, if you want to see your mother....."

During the pregnancy and childbirth, all attention will be on the mother of the child. She is the most important one. Everyone looks to her because she brings forth another life into the world. Similarly, the church dwells on Mary the mother of Jesus before Christmas. She brought forth LIFE into the world, the life of the one who gave her life. Mary's role in the history of salvation is unique and great. Praising the sinless virgin, the angel Gabriel declared that Mary is "FULL OF GRACE." And the Lord is with her. She is the highly favored one.

When the angel revealed his message to the Virgin Mary he gave her a sign to win her trust. He told her of the motherhood of an old and barren woman to show that God is able to do all that he wills. Mary sets out to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Elizabeth reiterates the confession of Angel Gabriel. "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!" (Lk. 1/41-42) "Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit **after** conceiving John, while Mary is filled with the Holy Spirit **before** conceiving the Lord.

We are called to be like Mary in accepting and believing the Lord Jesus Christ. St. Ambrose, a fourth century bishop of Milan said, "You are also blessed because you have heard and believed. A soul that believes both conceives and brings forth the Word of God and acknowledges his works. Let Mary's soul be in each of you to proclaim the greatness of the Lord. Let her spirit be in each to rejoice in the Lord. Christ has only one mother in the flesh, but we all bring forth Christ in Faith."