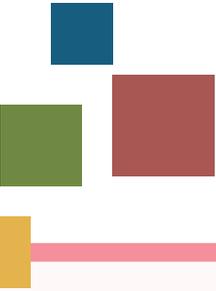


Towards Plenary Council 2020 -2021
Fourth Sunday of Advent 2018



“Blessed is she who believed”





Fourth Sunday of Advent

From the Readings

First Reading Micah 5:1-4. The Lord says this: But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, the least of the clans of Judah, out of you will be born for me the one who is to rule over Israel; his origin goes back to the distant past, to the days of old...They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power to the ends of the land. He himself will be peace.

Second Reading Hebrews 10:8-9. You do not want...the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin... Here I am! I am coming to obey your will!

Gospel Luke 1:42-45. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb...Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

Reflections

“The one who has hope lives differently.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, 2)

Christian hope and Christian humility are inseparable. (Thomas Merton, “Blessed are the Meek: the Christian Roots of nonviolence” in *Bridges*, Seven, 21)

Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do.

(Pope John XXIII. *Spiritual Testament. Journal of a Soul*, 343)

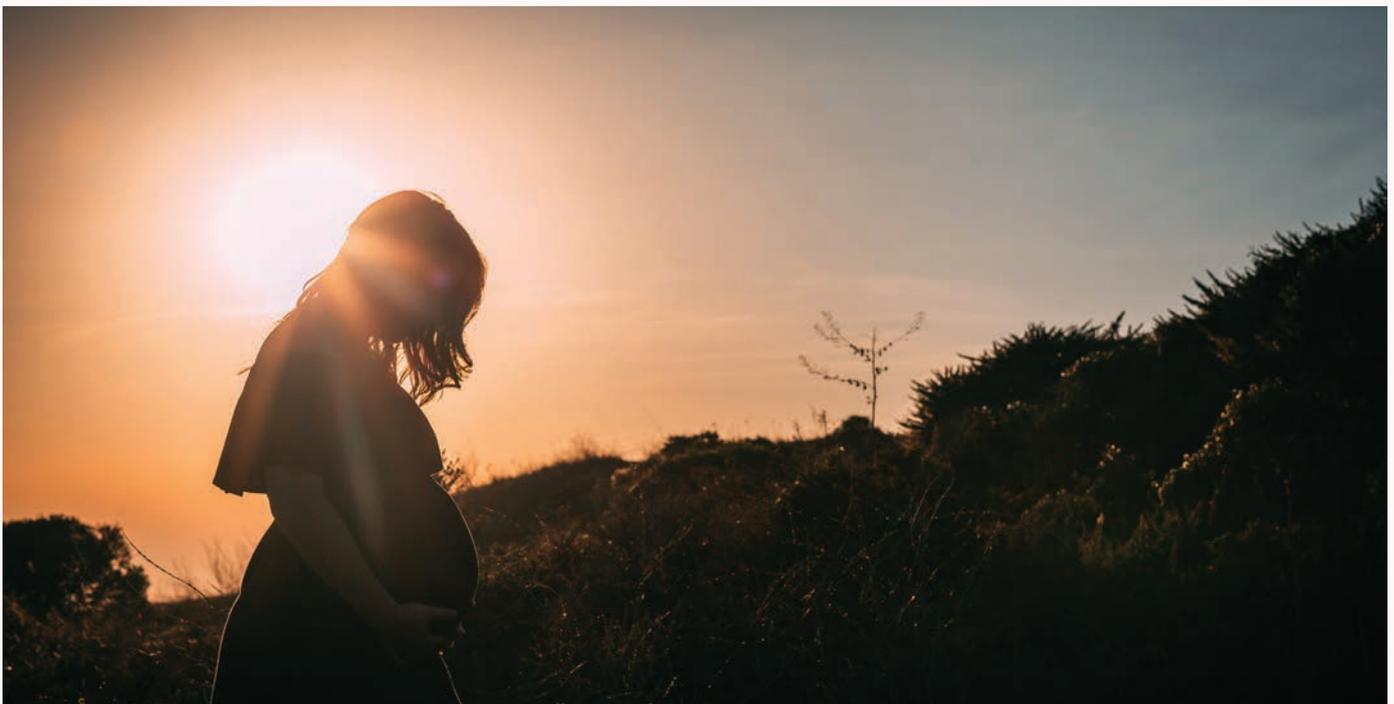
The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 1)

Towards Plenary Council 2020 -2021

We must all believe in love and peace. We must believe in the power of love. We must recognize that our being itself is grounded in love; that is to say, that we come into being because we are loved and because we are meant to love others. (Thomas Merton, Honorable Reader, in 'Bridges', Seven, 17)

For Thinking & Talking

- 1. Imagine** the scene with Mary and Elizabeth; Elizabeth's words and the emotions and thoughts of Mary's heart.
- 2. Translate to life:** Mary's belief in God's promises, her trust in God and her hope, were sure and certain, in spite of the seemingly impossible situation, and difficult future, she was facing. What can you, what can we, learn from her? How can you, and how can we, in communities, grow in faith, trust and our hope?
- 3. Express the heart:** Find words or an image for
 - Insights gained from these readings and reflections
 - A hope or intention for the future.



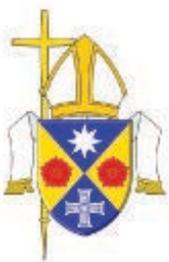
Prayer

May this Christmas
be for each of us,
a time of moving
beyond reason to wonder,
beyond grasping to letting go,
and beyond competition to cooperation,
in the power of the Babe of Bethlehem. Amen.

(‘The Babe of Bethlehem’ by W.L.Wallace in 600 Blessings, 136).



THE VISITATION 1491 - DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SANDHURST

Prepared for Advent 2018 Year C by: Adult Faith Education Sandhurst, PO Box 201 Bendigo, Vic, 3552. Email: adultfaith@sandhurst.catholic.org.au. Acknowledgements: As noted above and: Thomas Merton, 'Blessed are the Meek: the Christian Roots of nonviolence' in *Bridges to contemplative living with Thomas Merton*, Seven, Adjusting Your Life's Vision. Ed J Montaldo & R.G. Toth, Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2011, 21; John XXIII. Spiritual Testament. *Journal of a Soul*, 1954; Thomas Merton, 'Honorable Reader' in *Bridges to contemplative living with Thomas Merton*, Seven, 'Adjusting Your Life's Vision'. Ed J Montaldo & R.G. Toth, Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2011, 17; *600 Blessings and Prayers from Around the World*, p137. Compiled by Geoffrey Duncan, Mystic, CT: Twentythird Publications, 2005, 136.