

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, 18th December 2022

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16 A virgin will conceive (NIVUK)

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹ ‘Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.’ ¹² But Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.’ ¹³ Then Isaiah said, ‘Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also?’ ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you^[a] a sign: the virgin^[b] will conceive and give birth to a son, and^[c] will call him Immanuel.^[d] ¹⁵ He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, ¹⁶ for before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste.

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

¹ Hear us, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock. You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth ² before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us. ³ Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved. ⁴ How long, LORD God Almighty, will your anger smoulder against the prayers of your people? ⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have made them drink tears by the bowlful. ⁶ You have made us an object of derision^[b] to our neighbours, and our enemies mock us. ⁷ Restore us, God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved. ¹⁷ Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself. ¹⁸ Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name. ¹⁹ Restore us, LORD God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7 Jesus, son of David, Son of God (NIVUK)

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God – **2** the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures **3** regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life^[a] was a descendant of David, **4** and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power^[b] by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. **5** Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from^[c] faith for his name’s sake. **6** And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. **7** To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25 God's call to Joseph (NIVUK)

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^[a]: his mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. **19** Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet^[b] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. **20** But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. **21** She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^[c] because he will save his people from their sins.’ **22** All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: **23** ‘The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’^[d] (which means ‘God with us’). **24** When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. **25** But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.