

4th Sunday of Advent



In the first reading, Micah was an 8th century prophet who dwelled on social justice themes. At this time judges accepted bribes, merchants cheated customers, and all were corrupted by Canaanite religious practices. Micah saw a faithful remnant, an insignificant root that would bring forth a blossom of justice. Peace for the Jewish people was not the absence of war, but a sense of right relationship with God and with the community. From this would flow acts of justice and righteousness.

The second reading tells of God's call to stop hypocritical sacrifice and to start sacrificing oneself to God's will. The model of self-sacrifice was the death and resurrection of Jesus. The 1st use of the composite name "Jesus Christ" emphasizes His whole obedience to God's will.

The Gospel is centered on the anticipation of birth. Birth and death are the most human experiences known to us. We are given two children who would bridge the old covenant with the new; two children who would change the course of history, two whose kinship would alter the relationship between the Creator and the human creature. Mary's perfect and unqualified "yes" was the start of this relationship.