

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

COLLECT

We beseech thee, Almighty God, to purify our consciences by thy daily visitation, that when our Son thy Lord cometh he may find us in a mansion prepared for himself; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:4,8-16

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies.

Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Psalm 132:8-15

8 Arise, O LORD, into your resting-place, * you and the ark of your strength.

9 Let your priests be clothed with righteousness; * let your faithful people sing with joy.

10 For your servant David's sake,* do not turn away the face of your Anointed.

11 The LORD has sworn an oath to David; * in truth, he will not break it:

12 "A son, the fruit of your body * will I set upon your throne.

13 If your children keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them, * their children will sit upon your throne for evermore."

14 For the LORD has chosen Zion;* he has desired her for his habitation:

15 "This shall be my resting-place for ever; * here will I dwell, for I delight in her.

SECOND READING:

Romans 16:25-27

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the pro-

phetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith -- to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

GOSPEL:

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his

ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

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