

***The Virgin with Child***  
***The Fourth Week of Advent***

At the beginning of Advent, the Liturgy drew our attention to the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the ages. During the second and third Sundays of Advent, the focus was on the proclamation of John the Baptist who announced the First Coming of Christ in history. But today, on this Fourth and Final Sunday of Advent, our eyes are on the Virgin with Child and the Mystery of Christmas we will celebrate next week.

In the first reading we hear the prophecy of Isaiah: “the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.” In the Gospel we hear the fulfillment of that promise when the angel tells Joseph that Mary has conceived her child through the power of the Holy Spirit and that he is to call the child “Emmanuel,” a name that means “God is with us.” Finally, in today’s second reading, Saint Paul summarizes the good news that he preaches: “the gospel about his Son descended from David according to the flesh but established as Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness.”

Today’s liturgy is a profound reminder of the human origins of the Messiah. Jesus, the Son of God, is also a descendant of the great King David. He is the long-awaited Messiah. But why is he born of a Virgin? The answer to that question is revealed in the Mystery of Christmas. The virgin birth reminds us that Jesus is the gift of God. Born of a virgin, he is conceived by the power of God’s Spirit. Jesus is the supreme *gift of God*. This is why Christmas is about gift giving. The gifts we graciously give to each other remind us of *the* gift, the supreme gift that God gives to us: the gift his own Son who is our life and our salvation. Please join us at Mass next week when we celebrate the gift that is Christmas. *Father Matera*

**Christmas Eve 4:00 PM                      (Church and Parish Center)**  
**6:00 PM**  
**10:00 PM**

**Christmas Day 9:00 AM**

**11:00 AM**

**Sacrament of Reconciliation: Monday from 6:00 to 7:00 PM  
(no confessions this Saturday)**