

Heart ♥ to ♥ Heart



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Fourth Week of Advent 2021

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1st Reading: Micah 5:1-4a

2nd Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10

Gospel: Luke 1:39-45

As we enter the final week of our Advent preparation for Christmas, what stands out for me as I pray with the readings of this Fourth Sunday is this passage from the Letter to the Hebrews which begins, "When Christ came into the world, he said: 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me.'"

"A body you have prepared for me..." How is each of us called to praise God with our bodies? If we pay attention to this reading we are reminded that it is usually not extraordinary deeds that are required of us but rather noticing and responding with our bodies to the simple things all around us.

It's lovely to praise God with our bodies in Church, whether by our postures of kneeling, standing, etc., or by the words we say or sing; but we can also worship God with our bodies by the kind words we speak, by our smiles of comfort, encouragement, and love, and by graciously receiving and giving gifts. One of my favorite ways is by cooking a delicious meal or a treat for others. Do you have a favorite? The possibilities are endless.

Today's Gospel tells again the story of the newly pregnant Mary going to visit her cousin Elizabeth who was in the last months of her pregnancy. Both women praised God as they nurtured the Life growing in their bodies, but also as they comforted and supported one another during their time together. So sacred was this time that Elizabeth felt her infant John leap within her womb as she first heard Mary's greeting. How can we make another's heart "jump for joy" by our words of caring love?

May we each recognize the opportunities presented to us to worship and praise God with our bodies, especially during this final week before Christmas. May we find joy in the simple ways in which God comes to each of us.

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