

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Sun, Dec 23rd 2012**

23 December 2012,

4th Sunday of Advent On this last Sunday before Christmas, the gospel reading invites us to recall the different events that relate to the birth of Jesus. There were two annunciations: that of John the Baptist and then of Jesus. The birth of John was announced to a man, his father Zechariah, but that of Jesus to a woman, his mother.

Then, in today's gospel, what was announced by the angel was revealed to another woman, Elizabeth, who in turn bestowed a double blessing on Mary and on the fruit of her womb. Women are the other half of humankind, who throughout our history, have been set aside by the men, who ruled and oftentimes had made a mess of our world. But now, as God begins a new era, God sets apart these two women from whom will be born two men: the long Announced and the announcer to prepare for his coming.

Christmas would not happen if there was not a mother; Jesus would not be born if there was not Mary. More than offering sacrifices or material gifts, Mary, like our mothers, offered herself as a living sacrifice, her body as the dwelling place of her Son. As women accept to become mothers, they extend not only humankind but transmit the faith as well and continues the story of salvation. Let us learn this self-giving from Mary and our mothers—the sacrifice acceptable to God.

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