

# Living Christmas all year

**4th Sunday of Advent (December 22): (R3) Luke 1:26-38; (R1) 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16; (R2) Romans 16:25-27.**

Sunday's Gospel is about the announcement of the birth of Jesus. An angel, Gabriel, comes to Mary and says, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." Mary's reaction was one of fear and trouble. The angel sensed her dismay and said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be called Son of the Most High and 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 have no relations with a man?" The angel answered that the birth would be miraculous, "The Holy Spirit would come upon her and the child would be the Son of God." Mary answered, "Be it done to me according to thy word." Wow! What a story! What a miracle!

Perhaps even more impressive than the birth of Christ from a virgin is the outpouring of love that his birth always produces. Historians tell us that guns have fallen silent on Christmas Day in the midst of fierce battles. People whose hearts are cold and indifferent toward the poor and the downcast suddenly feel the urge to give money to charity.

People who have ignored Christ all year long find their way to a Christmas Eve service where their hearts are touched once again by this most beautiful of stories. Something magical, something miraculous, happens to people at Christmas.

A newspaper story told of eight-year-old Mark Amador's letter to Santa. "My Mom needs help bad! ..." His tale of woes ran from his mother's unemployment to selling almost everything the family had to get food. "I want clothes and food for us to last 3 months," wrote Mark. "Hope my Mom will have a job by then." Tucson, Arizona, postal workers came up with clothing, toys and food for Mark and his family.

Mark also confided to Santa that he tried to be good at school but had to contend with classmates who ridiculed his ears, which stuck out at right angles. Dr. Boyd Burkhardt, plastic surgeon, was asked by his nurse-administrator if he would be willing to fix an eight-year-old boy's ears for nothing. "Sure," Burkhardt said. "That's good," she replied, "because Channel 13 is on the line." Mark received a limousine ride to the operation! His mother was astounded by the response to Mark's



Father Albert Shamon

## A word for Sunday

letter. "It was a godsend," she said. "Things like this never happen to us." But it was Christmas — a time for miracles!

Such stories impress me. This is what Christmas is all about. God has reached into space and time to show us the meaning of love. And today, 2000 years later, the ripples of love first born in the manger in Bethlehem still radiate out into the world.

Some say, "Wouldn't it be great if

it could be Christmas all year long." Well, that was what God intended. There is only one thing that stands in the way of doing so — you and me. If we lived out on a daily basis the love, compassion and charity that are part and parcel of this special season — the world would be changed. The world is waiting for the people of God to live out what we say we believe: that Jesus Christ is the hope of the world, that living the Christ life of love and sacrifice and self-giving is the only ultimate way that humanity can be saved. When Christmas lives in our hearts, we will have at least made a beginning to spreading the spirit of Christmas not just at one time of the year but all year, every year. It can happen, especially to those who believe in miracles.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

## Daily Readings

**Monday, December 23**  
Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Psalms 25:4BC; SAB, 8-10, 14; Luke 1:57-66

**Tuesday, December 24**  
2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16; Psalms 89:2-5, 27, 29; Luke 1:67-79

**Wednesday, December 25**  
Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalms 96:1-6; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18 or 1:15-9, 14

**Thursday, December 26**  
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Psalms 31:3-4, 6-8; 17:21; Matthew 10:17-22

**Friday, December 27**  
1 John 1:1-4; Psalms 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; John 20:1A, 2-8

**Saturday, December 28**  
1 John 1:5-7, 22; Psalms 124:2-5, 7B-9; Matthew 7:13-18

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