

SUNDAY Plus

4th Sunday of Advent Divine Office Week IV Year A

A happy and blessed Christmas to you and yours from all of us at Redemptorist Publications



The Annunciation

And yet the quiet here
retains no trace of great Archangel wings...
A moment came, and that is all, a moment
came and passed, and in the passing left
a young girl here who was not now alone.
This was not she who lifted up her head,
and yet it was, and crowded days that stretch
beyond will still be bound for her in sun
and in the dark. Her steps will fall upon
the dust and leave an imprint there, and tasks
will weary her. Delicate, and now
so utterly bequeathed, her strengths are yet
her strengths.
This is God's chosen way with men,
to take men's way; and so, the streets she walks
and all the roads, the shepherds and the shepherds'
sheep, the winds, the firelight, Israel's hills,
will find just this, no more, a woman plain
upon the earth, and in her arms, a child.

John Lynch, *A Woman Wrapped in Silence*



The Annunciation fresco in church St Anton by Fritz Kunz (1921). Renata Sedmakova / Shutterstock.com

Our Mother Mary always wants to walk at
our side, to remain close to us, to help us
with her intercession and her love.

Pope Leo

Just a Little Donkey

Just a little donkey,
but on my back I bore
the one and only Saviour
the world was waiting for.
Just a little donkey,
but I was strong and proud;
I gladly carried Mary
through the chaos of the crowd.
I brought her to a stable
where she made a tiny bed...
a place for Baby Jesus
to lay his little head.
I pray the world remembers
that special Christmas night,
when just a little donkey
carried Heaven's precious light.



Author unknown

Mince pies and Christmas pudding

Christmas and mince pies go together, but before the Reformation, they were oblong or oval in shape. The pastry base symbolised the manger, whilst the filling was the straw and the top the swaddling clothes in which Mary wrapped the Baby Jesus.

Today's Christmas pudding is sweet and served with brandy sauce or brandy butter, but this was not always so. In medieval times, the pudding often

included rabbit, poultry, pheasant and partridge in its list of ingredients. By the end of the sixteenth century, eggs, dried fruit, breadcrumbs and brandy were added to thicken and flavour the mixture. The Christmas pudding traditionally had thirteen ingredients to represent Jesus and the twelve apostles. It was only in 1714, during the reign of King George I, that meat disappeared from the recipe. He also introduced the custom of pouring brandy over the pudding and setting it alight, apparently reminding the eaters of Jesus' passion, while the holly decoration represents the crown of thorns.

Lord God, be with us as we prepare to welcome your Son Jesus into our hearts and lives at Christmas. Watch over, protect and bless our families and all those whom we love. Amen.

READINGS

Today:	Mass at Dawn: Isaiah 7:10-14 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-24	Mass at 12:11-12 Isaiah 62:1-7 Titus 3:4-7 Luke 2:15-20
Monday:	1 Samuel 1:24-28 Luke 1:46-56	Mass During the Day: Isaiah 52:7-10 Hebrews 1:1-6 John 1:1-18
Tuesday:	Malachi 3:1-4, 4:5-6 Luke 1:57-66	
Wednesday:	Mass in the Morning: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16 Luke 1:67-79	
Thursday:	Vigil Mass: Isaiah 62:1-5 Acts 13:16-17, 22-25 Matthew 1:1-25	Saturday: 1 John 1:1-4 John 20:1, 2-8
		Next Sunday: Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6, 12-14 Colossians 3:12-21
		Mass During the Night: Isaiah 9:1-7 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14