

Christmas is coming

21 DECEMBER 2025

SUNDAY *Plus*

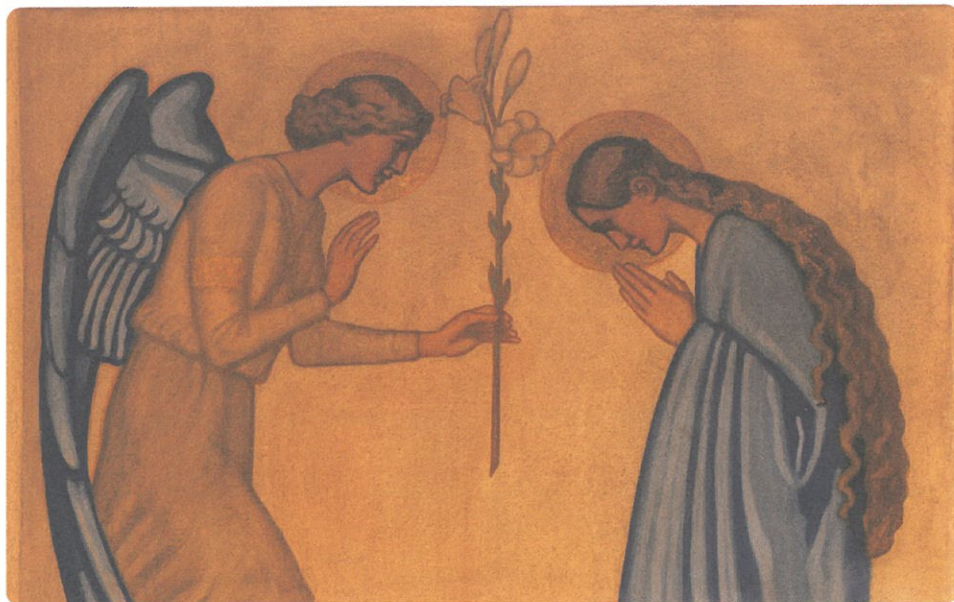
4th Sunday of Advent **Divine Office Week IV** Year A

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: Isaiah 7:10-14 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-24	Mass at Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12 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	Friday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 Matthew 10:17-22
Wednesday: Mass in the Morning: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16 Luke 1:67-79	Saturday: 1 John 1:1-4 John 20:1, 2-8
Thursday: Vigil Mass: Isaiah 62:1-5 Acts 13:16-17, 22-25 Matthew 1:1-25	Next Sunday: Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6, 12-14 Colossians 3:12-21 Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23
Mass During the Night: Isaiah 9:1-7 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14	