

Homily. 4th Sunday in Advent. Year. C. 18/19 December 2021.

Jesus came amongst us as one of us so as to do God's will. This was all that He was about. He sacrificed Himself, giving away what He wanted for Himself in order to speak forth and to do what God wanted said and done. His entire life and ministry, and finally His death and resurrection, were all about doing what God wanted for us, never about doing His thing for Himself. Jesus was wholly and totally for God and so we know Him to be the Holy One of God. As Hebrews put it; Jesus always said to God; Here I am! I am coming to obey your will.

We struggle with doing as Jesus did, with being as Jesus was. We have this trouble because we want to do our own thing, not God's. We have neither the singleminded focus and attentiveness to God's word that Jesus did, nor do we have His devotion to and trust in Gods loving goodness towards us. We're a little schizoid-like; on one level wanting to be like the Lord, on another level desiring only to please ourselves regardless of the consequences to us and to others. During the course of these two pandemic years we've seen quiet a lot of this please myself behaviour as well as acts of selfless loving service and goodness.

What, or better who can help us in our struggle to be like Christ? Well, the Holy Spirit of course. Remember, the Holy Spirit is the exact same Spirit of wholeness and holiness that filled Jesus, permeating every crevice and corner of His being. We count ourselves amongst the blessed and graced ones, for the Spirit of the Lord has been given to us, living inside of us. Now our question is; Will listen to this Spirit of holiness that leads and

aids us in living God's will, or will we listen the other voice within us, the voice of our ego's, our own desires and will to do our thing, not God's?

With Christmas coming upon us in 5 more days completing our Advent waiting and preparation, our Church presents us with the witness of two great women of God; the older Elizabeth, wife of Zachariah, and the youthful Mary of Nazareth. Both listened to God and found their own ways of trustingly said 'yes' to God's will. Their 'yes' to what God wanted was life-long. It was a 'yes' which each of them had to live with and live out for the rest of their days. In the strength of the Holy Spirit's action Elizabeth and Mary shaped their sons for us; John the Baptist who prepared the way and Jesus the Christ, our Saviour.

The key for these two great women to accepting and living out God's will was their listening attentiveness to and humility before God. This was their faith, their trust that, come what may, God only desired the best for them and would use them for the good of all, which God did. In letting go of what they willed for themselves into God's hands, will and plan their joy reverberates through the gospel of their meeting, revealing their faith and pleasure in doing God's will, gifts which they passed on to their sons as shown to us in the lives of John and Jesus. This way of God's will, of joy and blessing in daily living can be ours, too. All that we have to do is listen to God with open and humble hearts and minds, saying our own 'yes' to the way of loving service to others, trusting in the Spirit of God to inspire, guide and help us every day. If we do this then Christmas will come alive for us in a new and deeply real way, for it will be through us, too, that Christ will come into the world and be born again into this time of ours.