

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ; Grace and peace!

What an awesome Christmas gathering and celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe last Sunday. People were apparently eager for this timely event which even drew folks from other local churches, and warm fellowship was evident. Those of you who contributed must have been led with grace by the Divine Infancy. May the good Lord continue to bless your families and our precious faith community of St. Joseph the Worker.

That said, today we light the fourth candle of Advent, thus concluding our spiritual Advent journey. However, this should not be without opening our hearts in wonder and anticipation at Our Lady's Visitation in today's liturgy of the Word.

In the 8th century before Christ, Micah the Prophet offered great hope to his people who were still enduring their Babylonian exile. Our first reading's prophet relates that a ruler whose origin is from of old will be born in the small village of Bethlehem and would come feeding his flock by the strength of the Lord.... *his greatness even reaching to the ends of the earth!* While in the Second Reading, fortified by Micah, St. Paul impresses upon his brethren how Jesus Christ is the perfect sacrifice of obedience by His devotion and eagerness to do God's will.

In our Gospel reading, Luke fuses the Old and New Covenant as these two humble women meet to joyously celebrate God's kindness. We may recall how King David leapt and danced in front of the ark much like the pre-born John the Baptist does in Elizabeth's womb, upon encountering Mary. Was not this the celebration of the first Christian community?

We all need to carry Jesus to others as Mary did, sharing Christ in our daily life. Christmas is the cherished chance for our hearts to be filled with the spirit of Christ, allowing His rebirth within us. This is a supernatural event that energizes us to share His love with all whom we encounter: using humility, forgiveness, and compassion.

Therefore, following the example of Mary, we as Christians are inspired to bless and encourage one another in the faith. Like Elizabeth who extols her youthful cousin, let us keep inspiring the younger generations by uplifting and encouraging them; displaying the grace of forgiveness to our spouses and other family members, edifying how valuable they are to the Lord.

Blessed Sunday of Advent!