

SUNDAY PLUS

Here I am!

CHRISTmas people



By Fr Richard Reid C.Ss.R.

We have almost a full week ahead of us before the mighty feast of the Lord's birth will be upon us. The temptation may be that we have been preparing for so long that we might be wishing the days away, hoping that it will soon be Christmas Day. However, think again. Before the Christ child was born, Mary, his mother, was travelling about trying to make sense of many things and she had the wonderful encounter with her cousin Elizabeth. The meeting of the two soon-to-be-mothers was a significant one that we in the Christian world still remember to this very day.

Elizabeth recognises the presence of her Lord as soon as she hears the greeting of Mary. Elizabeth

is herself filled with the Holy Spirit and she cries out in joy. Elizabeth is conscious of the reality of the Lord Jesus through her yet unborn son.

In the coming week let us be like Mary's cousin Elizabeth. Let us be filled with the Holy Spirit and spread CHRISTmas joy. Let us recognise the presence of Our Lord by giving witness to him to those around us. Let us always be clear that Christmas is not about a tree and turkey, nice and all as they are, but let us truly witness to the power and the reality of the Lord Jesus by everything we do and everything we say. Let the Holy Spirit make us CHRISTmas people.

Fr Richard Reid is the Provincial Superior of the Redemptorists' London Province.

"[Mary] is not passive, she is active. She does not defer to God: she cleaves to God. She is a woman in love prepared to serve her Lord completely and immediately. She could have asked for a little time to think it over, or even for more explanations about what would happen; perhaps she could have set some conditions... Instead, she does not take her time, she does not keep God waiting, she does not delay."

Pope Francis

The story of the poinsettia

An old Mexican legend tells of a poor girl called Pepita who had no present to place before the baby Jesus in the church crib. Her cousin Pedro encouraged her, saying that Jesus appreciates even the smallest gift from someone who loves him.

Stuck for ideas, Pepita arranged some roadside weeds into a small bouquet, embarrassed because she had nothing else to give the Baby Jesus.

As she approached the crib, she remembered Pedro's advice and ignored the critical remarks of

some parishioners. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into bright red leaves and everyone realised that they had seen a miracle, which is why, in Mexico, the poinsettia is also known as the "Flores de Noche Buena", or "Flowers of the Holy Night".

The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are often thought to symbolise the Star of Bethlehem which led the Magi to Jesus. The red leaves symbolise the blood which he would later shed on Calvary. White leaves represent his purity.

Feast of the week
Saturday 25 December

Christmas

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



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.

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

Today: Micah 5:1-4 Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-45	Monday: Isaiah 7:10-14 Luke 1:26-38	Tuesday: Song of Songs 2:8-14 Luke 1:39-45	Wednesday: 1 Samuel 1:24-28 Luke 1:46-56	Thursday: Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24 Luke 1:57-66	Friday: Mass in the Morning: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16 Luke 1:67-79	Saturday: Vigil Mass: Isaiah 62:1-5 Acts 13:16-17, 22-25 Matthew 1:1-25	Mass During the Night: Isaiah 9:1-7 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14	Mass at Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12 Titus 3:4-7 Luke 2:15-20	Mass During the Day: Isaiah 52:7-10 Hebrews 1:1-6 John 1:1-18	Next Sunday: 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28 1 John 3:1-2, 21-2 Luke 2:41-52
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