

#### **4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Luke 1:42,45 - 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

(...) blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

I will base my reflection on the word "benedictus" (blessed) which appears three times in today's gospel (Luke 1:39-45). The word benedictus is made of two Latin/Italian words, "bene" (good) and "dire" (to say). Blessed therefore literally means "say good." The Lord who blesses says good things to those he blesses. In the case of today's gospel these words are said by Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit. It was therefore God's Spirit, or God, that spoke through her when she proclaimed how blessed Mary was, and the fruit of her womb.

**"Of all women you are the most blessed."** This is about the glory of Immaculate Conception that Mary uniquely received. We also share in this glory through our rebirth in baptism. Mary is blessed in her conception, and we are blessed through our baptismal consecration.

**"Blessed is the fruit of your womb."** What makes Mary more special is that she carried the Holy One in her womb. It is the God she carried that made her blessed and holy. Our Lady, Tabernacle of the Most High (Ngome Shrine) invites us all to share in this glory of carrying Christ. Through our reception of the Holy Communion we too receive Christ who makes his home in us. The mystery of the incarnation is of the eternal Word of God (Christ) that made his home among us, this allowing us all to carry Christ.

**"Blessed is she who believed."** This is the most important one and a challenge to all of us. Mary is blessed because she believed, because of her faith in what was revealed to her as coming from God. She is our example on how we are to believe God's message given to us through his Word. She inspired the servants at the wedding at Cana with the words "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5), something that she did well as we read in today's gospel acclamation, "I am the handmaid of the Lord: let what you have said be done to me." (Luke 1:38)

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I will meditate on the Glorious Mysteries today as I pray for your personal intentions. Have a wonderful day.

Fr Callistus