Reflection for the 4th Sunday of Advent
December 22, 2019
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1st Reading: Isaiah 7: 10-14
Responsorial: Psalm 24
2nd Reading: Romans 1: 1-7
Gospel: Matthew 1: 18-24

Just when you thought the prophet Isaiah always had his head in the clouds, along comes King Ahaz of Jerusalem to prove the prophet could run out of patience.

"Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also?"

Don’t we all know a King Ahaz—those hand wringers that make us roll our eyes, pull our hair. “Be patient. Have a little faith,” we say to them. “Ask for a sign from God.” Isaiah’s exact advice! But the young King Ahaz would have none of that.

Ahaz stood righteously with hands on hips and declared, “I will not tempt my Lord. I will not ask for a sign.” He knows that Isaiah always tells him “In quietness and in trust shall be your strength.” But he was never good at meditation or even sitting quietly.

Kings usually aren’t.

Meanwhile, just in case you thought God did not have a sense of humor, He tells Isaiah, “Ok. I’ll give him a sign.” And he whispers in the prophet’s ear. “A maid will be born and bear a son…” We, of course, know the sign. But, of course, we also know that the maid will not conceive for close to another 800 years. But God chuckles as Isaiah delivers the message. To find out if King Ahaz listened, go to (2 Chronicles:28)

Aren’t we all a little like King Ahaz?

How hard it is to get to that point when you can heed Isaiah’s message: “In quietness and in trust is your strength” (Is 30:15). God’s ways are not our ways; and neither is God’s time frame. So, when all the forces against you are gathering outside your castle walls, sit quietly with your hands over your heart, breathe slowly and repeat: In quietness and in trust is my strength. Then go ahead and ask God for a sign, but make it in your time frame. Something like: “Lord, let me know you hear my prayers by letting the sun rise in the east tomorrow.” But if you don’t want to tempt God, I’m pretty sure he’ll send you the same sign he sent to Ahaz.

A virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Emmanuel, God is with us.

PRAYER FOR LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE: 4TH WEEK
All-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
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