



# Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 23, 2018

Fourth Sunday of Advent (C)

Mi 5:1-4a

Heb 10:5-10

Lk 1:39-45

## True Love Means Sacrifice

God is often present in the little, hidden things of life. Take for example the small town of Bethlehem. This place barely appeared on the maps of the time. Yet in this dull town, overlooked by all, God wished to be born. God isn't into bling.

Look at the ray of light in the painting that shines from the upper left window directly down onto Mary's womb. She carries in her the Light of the World, but it happened in a way unknown to anyone. He is the Light of the World, shining to catch our attention, but he does so in silence, humility, and intimacy.

There is a second aspect of the Incarnation to learn here. Christmas was about a real sacrifice. Mary and Jesus offered their very selves. Hebrews says it wasn't an animal or a wheat offering but Jesus' very body and blood. The same for Mary, as it was her life, her virginity, her very intimacy, that she was opening to God when she agreed to be the mother of the Lord. It's easy to be generous when it doesn't touch too close to home.

So try not to look for glitz and externals this Christmas but for God's hidden presence. And imitate Jesus and Mary by giving of your very self. It's not about a fast, a donation, or extra prayers—as good as

those Advent practices are. But all of this prepares us to give our very selves to him in trust through the hidden acts of love of every day.

— Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Piece: *Annunciation*, 1427  
Artist: Gentile da Fabriano  
Location: Vatican Museums



### *For Reflection*

*What hidden acts of love can you offer during this upcoming Christmas?*

*Are there ways you can point out to your children God's presence in the little things?*

*We have been consecrated through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

*Hebrews 10:10*