

Gospel for 17 December: Christ's Humanity

Gospel during Advent for
December 17, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 1:1-17*)

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of

Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

Commentary

Saint Matthew begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus Christ: “the son of David, the son of Abraham.” God fulfills the promise of salvation that he made after Adam and Eve disobeyed his command (cf. *Gen* 2:16-17). He does so through Jesus Christ, in whom the promises made to Abraham (cf. *Gen* 12:3) and to David through the prophet Nathan (cf. *2 Sam* 7:12) are brought to fulfilment.

The genealogy shows us the ancestry of Christ according to his humanity and how the history of salvation reaches its fulness with the Incarnation of the Word. Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is the long-awaited Messiah.

In reading Christ’s genealogy, we see that four women are mentioned: Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba and Ruth. These four women were all

foreigners, a symbol that the salvation Christ brings is meant for all humanity.

We also see that some of those mentioned were sinners, such as David, who later repented. God carries out his salvific plans using people whose conduct was not exemplary. God saves us, sanctifies us and chooses us despite our sins and infidelities. Such is the realism that God wanted to record in the history of our salvation.

The genealogy also shows us how God has come close to us and how he wants us to follow him. He invites us to his friendship through Christ's Most Holy Humanity. As Pope Benedict wrote: "One does not begin to be a Christian through an ethical decision or a great idea, but through the encounter with an event, with a Person, who gives a new horizon to

our life, and with it a decisive orientation.”

At the end of the genealogy the name of another woman appears, Mary. The mother of the Messiah opens herself to becoming God’s mother through a short and incisive phrase: “be it done unto me.”

Despite our own mistakes and failings, we need to try to welcome Christ as Mary did. We need to respond “yes” to God’s will and strive to grow in friendship with Christ. During these days of Advent, we can wait eagerly for the Messiah’s arrival in the company of Mary.

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