



4th SUNDAY IN ADVENT **YEAR B – December 24, 2017**

Recall the beginning of the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 1, verses 1 to 17. There we find the genealogy of Jesus. It concludes with these words: From Abraham to David - 14 generations, From David to the Babylonian Exile - 14 generations, From the Babylonian Exile to Jesus - 14 generations. The passage tells us, Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Of her was born Jesus, who is

called the Christ.

Not everyone in that list is noble or saintly, like Joseph and Mary. Jacob stole his father's blessing in that first group. Israel's kings make up the second group. They reflect the best and the worst of Israel. Among those listed are idolaters, murderers, and adulterers like King David himself, about whom we hear in the first reading today from the second book of Samuel.

People unknown to us make up the third group of fourteen. It reminds us that God is at work in people others might consider un-important, un-needed, un-wanted or un-loved - as Paul reminds us in his letter to the Romans. Finally, the women in this genealogy have marital histories that include both scandal and scorn.

If this genealogy were ours, we probably would not want it published. And yet, in this family tree, we see how God's grace works through saint and sinner alike.

He continues to work through us as well. It's up to us to decide whether he's working through a saint or a sinner. When you get to the end of the genealogy of Jesus, you find the name of Mary and the gospel simply says, "Of her was born Jesus who is called the Christ."

The Gospel today reminds us of the uniqueness of Mary. She is the physical mother of Jesus. She carried Jesus in her womb and gave him life. No one else can make that claim. She is the only person on earth who can hold the Christ Child in her arms and say, "This is my body, this is my blood".

We, as Catholics, say that Mary is our Mother too. But how can that be? Several years ago, one of our catechists asked her children, who do you see when you look in the mirror in the morning. A little boy in second grade said, "I see Jesus". And there it is.

That little guy understood what Meister Eckhart was trying to put into words after his own mystical experience of Jesus dwelling within him. He became one with our Lord. If you are one with our Lord, then in a mystical way, Mary is your mother too.

Jesus can be born again and again in each of us if we do not abort him. We have this fourth Sunday of Advent to prepare ourselves for the birth of Jesus. How will you use it? I pray that you are one with our Lord. And like that little guy in second grade, may you see Jesus in the mirror in the morning on Christmas Day and Every Day.

