

## THE DAYS OF ADVENT

### 1st Sunday DAYS OF SIGNS

*There will be signs.  
Raise your heads...*  
(Lk. 21:25, 28)

### 2nd Sunday DAYS OF HISTORY

*In the fifteenth  
year of the reign  
of Emperor  
Tiberius...*  
(Lk. 3:1)

### 3rd Sunday DAYS OF CELEBRATION AND SHARING

*Whoever has  
two cloaks  
should share  
with the person  
who has none,  
and whoever has food  
should do likewise.*  
(Lk. 3:11)

### 4th Sunday DAYS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN

*Blessed are you  
among women,  
and blessed  
is the fruit  
of your womb.*  
(Lk. 1:42)



# Look, the days are coming...

*when I shall fulfill the promise of happiness I made.* Jer 33:14

## DAYS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN - IV Sunday

Mi. 5:1-4a; Ps. 79 (80); Heb. 10:5-10; Lk. 1:39-45

A young woman hastens toward the hill country; an elderly woman awaits her there. A child leaps in its mother's womb; another child comes to enable the lame and the paralyzed to leap with joy, to give reason for exultation to shepherds, farmers, the blind, the paralyzed, the poor of this world and the marginalized members of society like women and children.

And yet the women and children of this world bring with them the joys and the hopes, the woes and the anxieties of all humanity. They take upon themselves the labors of many people, not hiding behind an avalanche of words but offering themselves: their time, their simplicity, their many services, their exultation and cries of joy. Women and children of Africa, Asia, the Americas and Oceania; women and children of Europe—their land of origin or point of arrival.

Women and children—it is they who bring the good news that something fresh is emerging, that innovations are always possible, that death is not the last word and that hope is not only for fools or the deluded. Women and children were at the beginning of the story of Jesus: first in the stable, then along the roads he traveled, then under the cross and then at the empty tomb. Women, children: you are often considered the least of this world...but in my opinion you bring peace to the ends of the earth.

Fr. Luca Pandolfi

*Lord, look down from heaven  
upon the many women and children  
on the countless roads that crisscross our planet.  
They bear the burdens of many;  
they give life to joy and peace.*

*Lord, keep your hand on woman.  
Strengthen her and place her at your right hand.  
Lord, keep your hand on children.  
Strengthen them and place them at your right hand.  
Stir up your power  
and save them when they call upon you.*

## PRAYER

*Lord, you do not want sacrifices or burnt offerings.  
Sustain those who seek to implement your will  
of justice and peace.  
Be with those who bring life and joy  
to every new day, every home, every people  
in every corner of the earth.*

