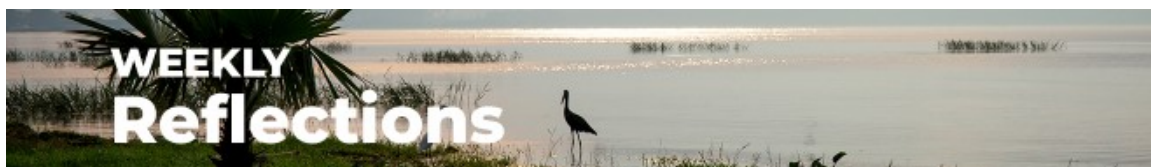


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Based on the gospel for 19 December, Fourth Sunday of Advent: Luke 1:39-45

“Blessed is she who believed the promise of the Lord would be fulfilled.”

In today's gospel, Mary and Elizabeth, having both received surprising news of their pregnancies, are preparing to become mothers for the first time. While it is joyful news, it is also challenging. We witness them turn to each other in love and embrace the promise that God will be with them.

The two women affirm, share and celebrate the blessing they have been given. In their joyful encounter they support each other as they look forward to what God is doing in and through them.

Women throughout the world today face unexpected and challenging situations. Nomita in Bangladesh lives each day at risk of losing her home and loved ones to cyclones. Despite the difficulty of trying to grow food on land poisoned by saltwater flooding, she has built her home, raised her children and made a living on her own. Her strength, determination and courage are inspirational.

This Advent, let's pray that we will be inspired by the encounter of Mary and Elizabeth – inspired with openness to encounter and to be in solidarity with all members of our global family; inspired with faith to hold onto God's presence and promises and inspired with the courage to proclaim God's kingdom.

Faithful God, you always keep your promises.

Strengthen our trust,  
as we long for your kingdom  
of justice and peace.

Make us a people of hope,  
sharing with the world  
the love and joy  
that we have found in you.

Amen.



## Advent calendar

Reflect on today's gospel in our Advent calendar, and be reminded of the dignity and value of each member of our human family.

Reflection for 17  
December



## World Gifts

Share God's gifts of hope and joy with your loved ones and with our sisters and brothers in poverty.

[Buy World Gifts](#)



## Christmas prayers

Pray with us throughout the Christmas season with this collection of beautiful prayers.

[Pray with us](#)

This reflection and prayer were taken from our [Advent calendar](#).



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