

fourth SUNDAY OF ADVENT

■ LIGHT THE ADVENT WREATH

*In the name of the Father, and
of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ...
Come Lord Jesus, be our light!
Help us to recognize you in others.*

■ READ THE GOSPEL for the Fourth Sunday of Advent (Cycle C) Luke 1:39-45

*“And how does this happen to me,
that the mother of my Lord should
come to me?”*

■ REFLECT WITH A STORY

In this Gospel reading, Mary travels to see her cousin Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist. When Elizabeth sees Mary, John the Baptist leaps within her. Elizabeth immediately knows this is because Mary is carrying Jesus, the son of God, in her womb.

Nobody expected that Mary—a lowly Nazarene woman—would be the person to bring the Messiah into the world. And yet Elizabeth recognizes Jesus in her.

We can still recognize Jesus in our world today. He tells us that whatever we do for those who are suffering and in need, we do for him (Matthew 25:40). But it can be difficult to recognize Jesus in others—especially in those who are suffering or left out.

In Nepal, which suffered a devastating earthquake in April 2015, many people live in poor conditions. And many people like Basu Dev Dahal struggle with infectious diseases like leprosy. Leprosy is a disease that can permanently leave people with discolored skin and deformed limbs. When Basu first developed leprosy, he wasn't welcome in his family or community because of the stigma attached to the disease. He received treatment and was cured, but he was left with deformed fingers.

The Nepal Leprosy Trust is an organization that hires people with leprosy. Like Elizabeth recognized Jesus in Mary, the staff at the Nepal Leprosy Trust recognize Christ in people often rejected by society.

Despite his deformed fingers, Basu began working in the leather goods workshop of the trust—he even became the supervisor! He was soon able to buy a home and provide for his wife and three sons.



Photo courtesy of Ten Thousand Villages

PRAY

Loving God, like Elizabeth, who recognized Jesus in Mary, we pray that we may recognize Jesus in others, especially in those who are suffering and most in need. Amen

REFLECT

Who in your life is most often left out? Why do you think that is? What can you do to include them?

ACT

This week, try to recognize the presence of Jesus in people who are sick. Think of someone you know who is sick—and reach out to him or her today.

GIVE

Buy a gift that supports people like Basu—and people who have been affected by natural disasters around the world.

Visit ethicaltrade.crs.org.