

## **Sunday Readings Reflections of 12/20/2015**

### **Reading 1 Micah 5:1-4a**

When the prophet Micah proclaimed the coming of a shepherd-king, the Israelites in Jerusalem were under attack. Their enemies, the Assyrians, were ready to "wipe them out." So the good news that God would send them a strong and just ruler was music to their ears. Their king would be born in Bethlehem—a small, unimportant town—of the royal family of David. And he would bring lasting peace.

After the resurrection of Jesus, the early Christian community recognized that these words of Micah were a wonderful description of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

### **Reading 2 Hebrews 10:5-10**

One of the messages in today's second reading is that we should recognize how the perfect sacrifice of Jesus differs from the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Those sacrifices were often offerings of animals. Jesus' sacrifice was the offering of himself.

Giving yourself—your time, talents, and love—is the greatest gift you can offer to others. Reflect for a moment on how willing you are to give this gift. Ask Jesus to help you to follow his example.

### **Gospel Luke 1:39-45**

Many artists have painted this moving scene described by Luke in today's gospel. Mary has made a difficult journey through the hill country to be with her relative Elizabeth, who is several months pregnant. The young woman, bearing in her body the Savior, and the older woman, carrying John the Baptist, embrace each other with tears and laughter. Elizabeth recognizes Mary's true identity as "the mother of my Lord." She calls Mary "blessed" three times. Mary is blessed because she trusted that the Lord's words to her would come true.