

## The Silent Mystery of Christ (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, Year B)

### **Romans 16:25-27—The Revelation of the Secret Mystery**

<sup>25</sup> Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, *according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret for long ages* <sup>26</sup> *but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all nations*, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— <sup>27</sup> to the only wise God be glory for evermore through Jesus Christ! Amen. (Romans 16:25-27)

1. Gospel = Paul uses as a synonym for “mystery” (Greek *mysterion*) (
2. Secret: “kept secret,” literally “kept silent” (Greek *sigāō*) for ages (15:25)

<sup>14</sup> For *while gentle silence enveloped all things,*  
and night in its swift course was now half gone,  
<sup>15</sup> *thy all-powerful word* (Greek *logos*) *leaped from heaven, from the royal throne,*  
*into the midst of the land that was doomed...* (Wisdom 18:14-15)

3. Prophetic Writings: Scripture *makes known* to the Gentiles the truth of Christ (16:26)

### **The Living Tradition**

Ignatius of Antioch: Now the virginity of Mary and her giving birth were hidden from the ruler of this age, as was also the death of the Lord—*three mysteries to be loudly proclaimed, yet which were accomplished in the silence of God*. (Ignatius, *Ephesians* 19:1; trans. M. W. Holmes)

Vatican I: in order that the “obedience” of our faith should be “consonant with reason” [cf. Rom. 12:1], *God has willed that to the internal aids of the Holy Spirit there should be joined external proofs of His revelation, namely: divine facts, especially miracles and prophecies which, because they clearly show forth the omnipotence and infinite knowledge of God, are most certain signs of a divine revelation, and are suited to the intelligence of all*. Wherefore, not only Moses and the prophets, but especially Christ the Lord Himself, produced many genuine miracles and prophecies; and we read concerning the apostles: “But they going forth preached everywhere: the Lord working withal and confirming the word with signs that followed” [Mark 16:20]. And again it is written: “And we have the more firm prophetic word: whereunto you do well to attend, as to a light that shineth in a dark place” [2 Pet. 1:19]. (Vatican I, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, Chapter 3; trans. R. Deffarari)

**Questions for Discussion and Reflection (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, Year B)**

1. According to Vatican I, what are some of the principal motives of credibility for believing that Jesus of Nazareth truly is the Messiah? What role do these motives play in your own efforts at evangelization?

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