

Sermon Title: **“With Love: Mi Casa Es Su Casa”**

Bible: **Micah 5:2-5a & Luke 1:39-55**

When: on the 4th Sunday of Advent, December 22, 2024

Where: about 25 people (plus YouTube Live Streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. Where Could I Stay like a Home?

As you know, I have a beautiful wife. This means that I have my parents-in-law. Have you visited your parents-in-law? How often do you visit your parents-in-law? Is it more than once a year? Because all of my family lives in Korea, it was difficult to visit my family and my parents-in-law. Because of my long immigration process and because of COVID-19, it made it more difficult to visit Korea to see my family. Finally, after twelve years, I had the opportunity to visit Korea to see my family and my parents-in-law in April of this year. I visited my grandmother who prays for me all the time, and who is in a care facility. I visited my parents, my sister, my relatives, and my parents-in-law. Are you, or were you, comfortable to visit your parents-in-law? Are you, or were you, comfortable staying with your in-laws? Did it feel like your home? When I was in my parents' home, I did not feel uncomfortable opening the refrigerator to look for what to eat. But when I was in my in-laws' home, I did not dare to open the refrigerator, even though I was well-fed at meals with a lot

of homemade Korean food.

2. Mi Casa Es Su Casa!

How long could you stay with your in-laws: one day, one week, or one month? In my case, I stayed at my in-laws' home for a total of three days. And they let me sleep in their bedroom. For your understanding, generally speaking, there is no concept of guest rooms in Korea, and my in-laws' home is not that big of an apartment. So they gave me the best place to sleep. I thought that I could not sleep well, but I slept very well thanks to my in-laws' hospitality. I felt "Mi casa es su casa" (My home is your home), or "Make yourself at home" at my parents-in-laws' home.

Today's Gospel of Luke is about Mary's visitation to Elizabeth. Mary was the mother of Jesus and Elizabeth was the mother of John the Baptist. Elizabeth became pregnant six months ahead of Mary. Elizabeth was introduced as a cousin or a relative in the Bible, but we do not know exactly how close they were, because they could be first cousins, fourth cousins, or more distant. But what we can discover is the hospitality of Elizabeth. How long did Mary stay at Elizabeth's house? Let me read Luke 1:56, which comes right after today's scripture reading, "And Mary remained with [Elizabeth] about three months and then returned to her home." Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months, even though both of them were pregnant. They needed more care for themselves, but I believe that they cared for each other. I am not sure if I could stay even with my parents, much less with my in-laws, for three months. I believe that Mary stayed for about three months, because Elizabeth welcomed

Mary just like “Mi casa es su casa.”

3. Mary’s Song of Praise

As we read, Elizabeth welcomed Mary as she was from the beginning. Elizabeth did not ask many questions about Mary and how the Virgin Mary could get pregnant. She just welcomed Mary and rejoiced in Mary’s visit! She might say to Mary, “Mi casa es su casa,” or “Make yourself at home.” I am not that brave to go into my mother-in-law’s kitchen and open the refrigerator. But I believe my wife uses my mother-in-law’s kitchen and the refrigerator, just like hers. Likewise, I believe that Mary felt comfortable in Elizabeth’s home, kitchen, and refrigerator, just like her own. In that case, there was no problem staying for about three months! Actually, there was joy for Mary in staying with Elizabeth. Mary sang a song when Elizabeth welcomed her, which is traditionally called the Magnificat, Mary’s song of praise! “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my soul rejoices in God my Savior...” I remember that when I visited my grandparents when I was young, I sang and danced a lot. When I visited my sister-in-law in Korea, my nephew showed me how to do TaeKwonDo, a Korean martial art, that he had learned, and my niece played the piano for me. I believe that when your grandchildren come to your home, they are often busy sharing their stories, songs, dances, or sports. They are not shy about what they do and who they are, but they are proud of themselves, and they want to show who they are because they feel your sincere hospitality and love for them. I am sure they feel that your home is just like their home.

4. Mi Iglesia Es Su Iglesia!

Mi casa es su casa! My home is your home. Please make yourself at home. And if it is possible, I would like to say this: “Mi iglesia es su iglesia.” My church is your church. Please make yourself at home at church. I hope that my church can be your church, when you need a safe place to come as you are. I hope that my church can be your church, when you need prayers and help. I hope that my church can be your church, where you can cry out to our Lord and praise the Lord! I hope that my church can be your church, where you are fully loved, and where your grace and love is overflowing! I hope that Elizabeth’s hospitality and Mary’s joy will be with all of us and in this church! Can we say to each other, “Mi iglesia es su iglesia”? My church is your church and our church! Amen!

Closing Prayer

Loving and living God, during this season of Advent, we see Elizabeth’s hospitality, care and love for Mary. Mary was loved by Elizabeth, and she rejoiced and sang in praise. O Lord, let us make your church, where hospitality and love are overflowing. Let my church be your church and be our church! In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.