

God is waiting with us

2nd Week of Advent – Year A

IS 11:1-10, PS 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17, ROM 15:4-9, MT 3:1-12



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Good evening. We have some wonderfully rich images in our readings today. Let me begin with a story.

When my daughters were small we had what we called Science Saturdays. We would spend Saturday mornings doing some kind of project meant to engage. Some of our projects involved dry ice, solar cells, electricity and all sorts of good stuff. One project focused on plant growth. Thinking back, I am sure that we started with growing and dissecting lima beans. We moved from there to sunflowers. We were living in Texas at the time and certainly had plenty of sunlight to work with. The rule was that the growth of the plants had to be measured and recorded daily. The ground was cultivated and prepared. The seeds were sown at various depths and tagged to determine what effect depth would have on overall growth. With pencils, rulers and notebook paper, they marked out charts with columns to record the data. The day after planting found them lying on the ground looking for the first sign, the first leaf to poke through. They recorded, “No Growth Today.” They were so patient. Eventually their 12” ruler could no longer measure the plants and they began using a tape measure. Soon it took both of them to make the measurements, one the ground and the other on a ladder to measure the plants that had grown over 10 feet tall. It was a good project.

The Prophet Isaiah tells of a time of peace where, “The wolf will be a guest of the lamb.” Isaiah 11:6 I would love to see that especially in the turmoil that we feel today. So why does God not give us this peace? We do not have peace because God gave us the gift of our freewill. We will know the peace that Isaiah speaks of when humanity chooses kindness over violence, charity over greed. We will know peace when we can see beyond the color of another’s skin.

John the Baptist speaks today saying, “I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one that is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

Matthew 3:11

Created in God’s image and likeness we share, humanity shares, in that Holy Image and Spirit. As I was thinking of these readings, I saw my daughters laying on the ground waiting to see the first green shoots of life. Through Jesus, God has planted the seed of his Spirit within our hearts. He has tilled the soil of our heart and graced it with the sacraments and everyday gifts of life. He knew that the mystery of his love would be hard to fathom. Therefore, he sent his Son so that he might write his Word upon our heart. That is the seed that God has so patiently watered and cared for.

Advent is a time of waiting. Waiting to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Know that God also is waiting. Waiting for heart and soul of humanity to give birth to his Son. He is waiting for the tender green shoot of Jesse to sprout from the heart of man. When that day comes, “There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord...” Isaiah 11:9

God is waiting with us. I yearn to see a time of peace. Not just a cessation of war and hostilities but real peace among men. We should extend, “Good Will and Peace to All,” more than once a year. It must be more than a Hallmark Greeting and bridge each encounter. This Advent, know that, God is waiting with us.

The Good News is Jesus. He is the gift of gifts. Through the power of his life and love, we *WILL*, ultimately know peace. St. Paul prays with us today, “May the God of endurance and encouragement, grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus, that with one accord, you may with one voice, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 15:5

Now, to all those who will have a hand in preparing the holiday meals. Put on your aprons as vestments. As you prepare the meal, know that the love that you feel for family and guests sanctifies. Bless the food and give thanks for Jesus. Where two or more gather in his name, he will be with you. He will share in the laughter and the joy of your table. The love that you share will have the power to heal. It has the power to bring calm and peace to family and world.

References

All scripture quotations are taken from;. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.

Note: I still have the tape measure that my daughters used to measure the sunflowers. Each time that I pick it up, I smile to myself. I smile, remembering them and the sunflower project.