

## Homily of Second Sunday of Advent Year A

Today, we light the second purple candle called the Candle of Peace. During the second week of our Advent journey, we pray for peace in our hearts, in our homes, in our neighborhood, in our society, in our church, in our country, and in our world. Jesus Christ, whose birthday we are preparing to celebrate, is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). In the first reading, Prophet Isaiah presents an imagery of the harmony that exists where there is peace: "Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear shall graze, together their young shall lie down; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the viper's den, and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair. They shall not harm or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea." The above imagery can be interpreted to mean that God has blessed us with different strengths, talents, gifts, charisms, temperaments, feelings, desires, colors, resources and so on. Each of the blessings should be for helping, supporting, and building up of one another. God's blessings are never for "survival of the fittest," or "might is right."

St Paul writes in the second reading, "May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think harmony with one another, in keeping with Jesus Christ, that with one accord you may with one voice glorify God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God." Note carefully the way St. Paul expresses the same message of peace in the first reading: "think harmony," "with one accord," "with one voice," and "welcome one another."

In the Gospel, we read the message of Prophet Isaiah, "A voice of one crying out in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight his paths." Let us make effort to interpret the meaning of this message:

**A voice of one crying out:** This is an urgent invitation from God.

**In the desert:** To us, laid waste by sin and sorrow.

**Prepare the way for the Lord:** To repent from sin and free ourselves from sorrow.

**Make straight his paths:** So that there is no hindrance to the spiritual re-birth of Christ in us.

As a desert is made impassible due to thorns and thistles, hills and gullies, sand and dryness; that is how our relationship with God is estranged by sin and sorrow. Let us avail ourselves of the opportunities of Advent's spiritual exercises to prepare the way for Lord and make straight his paths.

For us, followers of Christ, let us not be distracted or carried away by the heightened social and commercial activities of Christmas celebration. Over and above the social and commercial activities is the spiritual benefit of Christmas, that is the re-birth of Christ in our life and the new persons we become as a result of the re-birth. If the spiritual benefit of Christmas preparation and celebration is excluded, the celebration loses its spiritual meaning and power.

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