

2020 December 06

Second Sunday of Advent

Reading:

First: Reading: Isaiah 40.1-5, 9-11 *“Speak tenderly to Jerusalem!”* (2)

The Psalm: 85 *“Righteousness and peace will kiss each other.”* (10b)

Second: 2 Peter 3.8-14 *“The Lord is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.”* (9)

The Gospel: Mark 1.1-8 *“The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me.”* (7a)

Herald of Good Tidings

Take a deep breath, and release, and relax. Do it again, and again. I feel that Isaiah is telling us exactly that. The people in his time needed it. They were at great discomfort and distress, going through a brutal slavery accompanied by many killings and banishment. In all probability people in his time and after took much comfort from his prophecy, which were fulfilled, and realized by the discerning minds only. This prophesy had a message of comfort to Israelites of the prophet's time. It had meaning, relevance, and value at the time of Jesus in his earthly human existence, and ever after throughout the history of humanity. It has much deeper meaning in our time and for each of us.

Humanity is truly looking for a word of comfort from the Lord today, because the earthly comforts we might feel here are just transitory. We must look toward the horizon and beyond. That is precisely what Prophet Isaiah and John the Baptist are telling in the scripture today, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord.’ The comforts the Lord is giving here on earth are invitations to prepare for the lasting comfort kept in store for those who truly seek the Lord. Once we have a vision of this lasting comfort in store, the little comforts and luxuries we strive after here on the ground will look like the quick-vanishing fireflies.

Imagine the immensity of comfort found in the metaphor of the *“Shepherd feeding the flock, gathering the lambs in his arms and carrying them in his bosom, and gently leading the mother sheep!”* (Isaiah 40.11) Looking at our times, can we imagine steadfast love and faithfulness meeting, and righteousness and peace kissing each other? We may find glimpses of these occasionally; they are not that common place. It is good to be reminded of Peter's reflection, namely, *“The Lord is not slow about his promise but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.”* (1 Peter 3.9) The Lord's patience is looking for a change of heart in us.

The cry of the Baptist to ‘prepare the way’ is still going on in our concrete deserts, in the soulless sports arenas, in our loveless and limitless sexual orgies, in the intoxicated and narcotic partying, in our relation-less families, in our unforgiving social environments, in our searching sites of unlimited pleasure and comfort, in our cutthroat business fields, in our unquenchable power centers, in our self-defeating political bargains, in our Sabbath-less Sundays, and **similar idol-worshipping fields**. The cry is loud. Some listened to the Baptist. Do we listen now? Will we be the recipients of the comfort God is offering through Isaiah? Could we be the objects of the Lord's patience as perceived by Peter? We are in the Advent season and need to sharpen and tune our minds to these great invitations and offers given to us through the Prophets, the Baptist, the Apostles and Evangelists. Allow the Spirit of God to murmur to our hearts and to warm it up and tune our minds to the heavenly enticements!

Fr. George

(The readings of the day are given at the beginning. The numbers in parentheses refer to the quotes from them. Good to go through the readings beforehand to properly understand the Reflections)

