



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year A) – December 5, 2010

"Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb...the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them." (Isaiah 11:6)

"May God, the source of all patience and encouragement, enable you to live in perfect harmony with one another according to the spirit of Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and voice you may glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 15:5-6)

"When John the Baptizer made his appearance as a preacher in the desert of Judea, this was his theme: 'Reform your lives! The reign of God is at hand.'" (Matthew 3:1-2)

The above three passages are this weekend's readings. The theme of reconciliation is obvious. Isaiah portrays natural enemies, prey and predator, living in harmony. Paul admonishes the Christians of Rome, for the glory of God, to live in unity. Matthew introduces John the Baptist as, "A herald's voice in the desert," crying out to all who would listen, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."

These dramatic changes do not happen just because we decide for them or by our action alone. No, the harmony spoken of in the Scriptures comes from God's gift of being present with us, and our embracing the gift.

Advent and Lent share more than the same liturgical colors of violet and rose. They are seasons with a focus on penance, conversion. It is appropriate in these seasons to look more deeply into our lives to root out what is not of God and clothe ourselves in God's mercy. For these two seasons lead us to the events that have forever changed the world and opened for us a path to eternal life with God. In Advent we prepare to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas (the Incarnation of God's Son), and in Lent we prepare to celebrate the true meaning of Easter (Jesus' death and resurrection). Without Christmas, there would have been no Easter, and without Easter, we would still be dead in sin.

The origin of the word, sin, has its root in the phrase, to miss the mark. The image is much like an archer who must practice, at great length, before being able to consistently hit the bull's eye of the target. The life of a Christian also takes work, since the darkness of sin is always ready to knock us off track.

To continue the image of Christ as our Light, use the following prayer at your meals.

Leader: Father, help us to prepare the way of Jesus. By Your example may we be kind to each other and everyone we meet. May we live in Your Light and turn from the darkness of sin.

As two violet candles are lighted, the leader says: Christ our Light.

Everyone responds: Thanks be to God!