

## Homily of Second Sunday of Advent, Year A, 2025

Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Romans 15:4-9; Matthew 3:1-12

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 communities, 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) and “He is our peace” (Ephesians 2:14).

We pray for the repentance of those who cause insecurity and violence in our society and those who cause war in our world. The worsening situation of insecurity, violence, crimes, and wars is because some leaders of communities and countries are blinded by insincerity and selfish interests. Some of them are accomplices to various wars and heinous crimes against humanity. For instance, the insecurity and killings in Nigeria, and the war between Russia and Ukraine will end in no time if leaders tackle the causes with fairness and justice. Truly, every corner of the earth will know peace if leaders eschew selfish interests but adopt the path of fairness and justice.

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.”

God has blessed us with different strengths, talents, gifts, charisms, temperaments, feelings, desires, colors, races, tribes, resources, religions, beliefs, and so on. Each blessing should be for helping, supporting, and building up of one another. God’s blessings are never for harming or destroying others. Sadly, this is not the case around the world. What we see is “might is right.” We pray for victims of injustice, violence, and war. We pray for God’s intervention and restoration.

St. Paul prays for peace 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 St. Paul’s choice of words in his message of peace: “think harmony,” “with one accord,” “with one voice,” “welcome one another.” Can we apply these beginning with ourselves, our homes, our community, and so on?

In today’s gospel, we read the prophecy of Isaiah about John the Baptist, “A voice of one crying out in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight his paths.” Deserts are impassable due to thorns and thistles, hills and gullies, sand and stones. Deserts do not have straight paths. To make a straight path, thorns and thistles need to be cleared, hills leveled, and gullies filled with sand and stones. In the same way, spiritual thorns and thistles, hills and gullies, sand and stones (our sins and sorrows) are a hinderance to the spiritual re-birth of Christ in us. Let us avail ourselves of the opportunities of Advent’s spiritual exercises to prepare the way for the Lord and make straight his paths into our lives.

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 are the spiritual benefits of Christmas, that is the re-birth of Christ in our lives and the new persons we become as a result of the re-birth. If the spiritual preparation is excluded, the celebration loses its spiritual meaning and power.

John the Baptist says to us in the gospel, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” He adds, “Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance.” How does one recognize good fruits in him or her? Some good fruits are, closeness to God, improved life of prayer, forgiveness, reconciliation with estranged relationships, Sacrament of Reconciliation, works of mercy, works of charity, and so on. St. Paul mentions more fruits in Galatians 5:22-23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

We conclude with praying with the first reading: may the spirit of the Lord rest upon us, a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord and the delight of the fear of the Lord. Through the unction of the spirit of the Lord, may we produce lasting good fruits. Amen.

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