

December 4, 2022

Second Sunday of Advent

Is 11:1-10

Rom 15:4-9

Mt 3:1-12

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

GROW: Harmony. It can seem so elusive in these times when our newsfeeds bombard us with reminders of what's wrong with our world: War, political conflicts, hunger, injustice, violence. We may also experience discord in our homes or within our hearts. Perhaps that is why the beautiful imagery in Isaiah's prophecy, where Isaiah envisions a world transformed by the coming of the Messiah, strikes a chord as we prepare for Christ's coming: We picture the wolf lying beside the lamb, and the calf with the lion. All will be right with the world. As we reflect on the areas in our lives that lack harmony, we are reminded to focus on Jesus and the Father, the source of all good. Through prayer and reflection on our Advent readings, we can "prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."

GO EVANGELIZE | PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

GO: I have a "smart" alarm clock. To shut it off, I just have to say, "Alexa, turn off my alarm." Easy, right? Well, too easy, it turns out, because lately I've slept right through the one-sided conversation. But it's hard to miss John's wake-up call: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Perhaps, though, we've become complacent; we've heard it so often that we skip right past it. That can happen during Advent, this season of preparation and, yes, repentance. I love our family traditions – candy every day, in the morning!; our well-worn Nativity set; lighting the Advent candles; Christmas concerts and gatherings. None of those are bad, of course, but in the blur of the season we must be challenged by John the Baptist's words to prepare not only our homes but our hearts for Christ's coming. During this season, we can examine our lives to separate the wheat from the chaff, focusing on those things that bring us closer to the Lord and one another. As St. Paul encourages the Romans, "Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God."

PRAY: St. Paul's words above give us pretty clear instruction for how to live out our faith by welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us. Reflect on these words during daily Advent reflection this week: When have we welcomed others in our lives – and truly loved them? How can we do that for someone in the coming days?