

Second Sunday of Advent

Year A

Is 11:1-10

Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17

Rom 15:4-9

Mt 3:1-12

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The Scriptures for this 2nd Sunday of Advent call us to reflect on an incredible promise. There will be so much peace and joy that wolf will be guest of lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, calf and young lion shall browse together, the baby shall play by the cobra's den!

A few years ago, the Berlin wall crumbled at the beginning of that Advent, atheistic Communism seemed to be diminishing at a rapid pace. It was an incredible time! I began to be lulled into thinking that the Messianic times had arrived!

Today, however, those feelings are dashed by an unholy war in Iraq. Thousands of innocent people are dying, the world suffers with an AIDS pandemic and countless are living below the level that befits human dignity. I feel overwhelmed by such realities and observations. What can I do?

The second reading calls us to be welcoming people. We must open our arms and share interdependently with one another. Stop the judging and categorizing! Look for ways to bring encouragement and harmony with one another. These are principles worthy for application to ALL, especially to those outside of our comfortable circle, our 'Gentiles'!

John the Baptist challenges the Obstacle-Makers to peace and joy, those who are hypocrites, liars, judges of others. These are the ones who build barriers on the road to the Lord. The paths that they construct become insurmountable by war, misuse of power and prejudice. We are the Obstacle-Makers to the straight paths to the Lord! We must turn (convert) our selfish, egocentric ways and radically turn back to make straight the paths by acceptance of all others and by using all of our resources (time, talent, money, intellect) to bring about a world of peaceful interdependence. Only then will we be able to celebrate true Christmas peace and joy.

Therefore, when we come to Communion today and say, "Amen", let this response be our promise that we will en flesh once again the promise of peace that will bring joy by being Body of Christ to our world of broken relationships, fractured neighborhoods, and borders of ideologies that demand military enforcement. Let us join with Isaiah and John the Baptist to be the Makers of Straight Paths for the Way of the God of Peace!