

HOMILY for 3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Year A

In the first Sunday of Advent, we have learned that the people of God hoped for a world free of wars & fighting due to their past invasions & enslavement by the foreign empires. They prayed for a savior to bring them justice & a new world order where the whole creation would get along & take care of one another. This Sunday prophet Isaiah lets us know how the Lord would transform our current world & bring the people of God a great miracle upon His coming. Here is how today's First Reading shares with us about that miraculous transformation, "The desert & the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice & bloom. They will bloom with abundant flowers, & rejoice with joyful song." It continues, "Strengthen the hands that are feeble, make firm the knees that are weak, say to those whose hearts are frightened: 'Be strong, fear not!' Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you. Then the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf be cleared; then the lame leap like a stag, then the tongue of the dumb will sing." As we can see, the Lord will renew & transform the whole Creation upon His coming. He will bring life & hope to our desolate & broken world. If He sees a dry, lifeless desert, He will refresh & restore it to a fruitful land. If He encounters the lame & the crippled, He will bring them healing & restore them to a new life. Apparently the Lord will breathe new life into our world & restore hope & joy to the people of God when He comes.

I don't know about you, but I think that one of the biggest sins that we humans have committed against the Creator is the destruction of God's Creation. Imagine that your family has passed on to you its poverty or business; & you are expected to do something with it. If you could grow that business or do something good to that property, your family would be proud of you & you would keep the legacy of your family alive. But, if you don't do anything with it, or worst yet you destroy that property or bankrupt that business, you would bring shame to your family. The future generations of your family would have nothing to establish their lives & develop their prospect. That is something none of us would be pleased & excited about. Unfortunately, that is exactly what is going on in our world right now. We have continued to exploit the resources of God's Creation for our own benefits without taking good care of it. That is why we have seen so many natural disasters happen around the world these days. Wild fires & destructive floods have wiped out thousands of acres of lands & destroyed millions of lives. If we do not address those problems & try to restore God's Creation to its original status, we would soon turn our world into the desert & parched land. That would spell doom to our human family & its future. That is why we need a Savior to help our world turn its life around.

However, the savior does more than just restoring our world to God's original Creation. He will also bring healing & new life to all the broken creatures. He will heal the blind, the deaf, the mute, & the lame. He will restore hope to the suffering & the hopeless. He will fill every human heart with joy & give every human being a reason to live for. If you've ever dealt with life problems or had to endure some terrible suffering, you would realize how important the gift of healing is in your life. Our world is broken in many ways & desperately in need of healing. Every human being is suffering physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. Unfortunately, most people do not realize it & continue to cause more suffering & pains to others. We can help usher in the coming of the Savior for our world by doing what prophet Isaiah proposes in today's First Reading. That is, "strengthening the hands that are feeble, making firm the knees

that are weak, & saying to those whose hearts are frightened: 'Be strong, fear not!'" If we follow that proposal, we do not only expedite the coming of the Savior but also help transform our current world.

Meanwhile, St. Paul gives us this admonition in today's Second Reading, "Be patient, brothers & sisters, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer awaits the precious yield of the soil. He looks forward to it patiently while the soil receives the winter & the spring rains. You too must be patient... Do not grumble against one another, my brothers & sisters, lest you be condemned." So, we are advised to suffer quietly & wait patiently for the coming of the Savior. We should stop fighting & grumbling against one another. For that does not help us prepare well for His coming.

My dear brothers & sisters, in today's Gospel, we learned that John the Baptist raised these questions to the people of God back then, "...What did you go out to the wasteland to see? ...What did you go out to see – someone luxuriously dressed? ...Why then did you go out to see – a prophet?" I believe that he poses similar questions to us in the twenty-first century, "What do you go out to meet this Advent – someone famous, glamorous, charming, or wealthy? ...Why then do you go out to meet this Advent – a savior?" Hopefully we can answer his questions by looking within ourselves to see what we need a savior to do for us at this time in our lives. Meanwhile, we can help prepare for the coming of the Lord by stopping all the fighting & putting on the joyful spirit of the season. When we do that, this Advent Season will mean a lot more to us & get us ready for upcoming time of Christmas.