



Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday of Advent (A)
December 11, 2022

The Splendor of God

By Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

“Here is your God!” Who wouldn’t run to see this marvel? Isaiah tells us what to look for: nature will explode with excitement and splendor, and the hardships of life will no longer hold us captive. Is this really possible, or is it merely hopeful poetry? Jesus tells the disciples of John the Baptist that it’s possible. In fact he, Jesus, is the one who has ushered in the kingdom of heaven. Since that is true, why don’t you and I see it?

The reading from James sheds light on this. There is something wondrous about earth bringing forth “precious fruit” (James 5:7). Our understanding

of how the development and emergence of fruits occur does not make the fact of natural growth any less wondrous. Farmers know this well. They also know that such growth will occur only when human labor cooperates with the laws of nature designed by God. In other words, the farmer provides the labor while God provides the life-giving sun and rain.

If our world does not resemble Isaiah’s astonishing portrait or the healing that Jesus was able to accomplish, might it be that we have not done what we can to remedy the hardships of life that hold so many captive? When God enters our lives, he provides us with the power we need to change our world, but we must be willing to allow that power to work through us. If we are open to God in our midst, our world will be rich with life and healing, and everyone will know that God is really here. +

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 35:1–6a, 10

Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God...he comes to save you.

James 5:7–10

You too must be patient....because the coming of the Lord is at hand

Matthew 11:2–11

The blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them.

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A Word from Pope Francis

Advent tells us that it is not enough to believe in God: it is necessary to purify our faith every day. It is a matter of preparing ourselves to welcome not a fairy-tale character, but the God who challenges us....The Child who lies in the manger has the face of our brothers and sisters most in need.

Angelus, Rome, December 15, 2019



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- In what ways might you enrich the life of another?
- What can you do to heal the broken relationships in your life?

The Miracle that Summons Us

By Barbara Hughes

I've always been a morning person. It's possible that my body clock was genetically programmed to rise with the morning sun, but more than likely it was the demands of a busy life that would awaken me during the predawn hours. But regardless of the genesis, somewhere along the road to adulthood, the early-morning hours became sacred.

As the size of our family increased, so did the need for my holy hour with God. I might spend the time reading Scripture, praying the rosary, or simply pouring out my heart to God. How I spend the time has become less important than entering the sacred space where I meet the person I truly am: a beloved child of God, not because of anything I do, but because of who God is. Knowing this helps keep the past in right perspective, allows me to celebrate the present, and prepares me for the day ahead. Watching and waiting during the time before the sun rises remains a guilt-free luxury, not so different from the season of Advent.

The way I see it, Advent is to Christmas as dawn is to daylight, an occasion for humble expectation and joyful celebration when time seems still. It heralds the rising of the Son from the night of sin, inviting Christians to ponder the mystery of Christ's threefold coming: in history, with us now, and in anticipation of his Second Coming.

Such a regal liturgical season calls for purple vestments, greenery, and the lighting of candles. Transcending the



barriers of time that once held the world in bondage, Advent calls forth age-old stories about Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zechariah. No longer distant figures from the past, these saints bid hearts to prepare for the birth that is ever ancient, ever new.

During the predawn days before Christmas, the communal celebration becomes personal when Mary's *fiat* invites me to say yes to God and when Elizabeth's greeting challenges me to see Jesus in the face of a weary salesclerk. When life's events rob my soul of peace, Joseph reminds me to trust God, and when self-doubt threatens to steal my identity as a child of God, Zechariah invites me to sit in silent prayer and breathe in love's miracles.

Some have called Christmas a magical season, but there's nothing magical about God becoming man. The Incarnation is a mystery and the miracle that summons Christians to receive the Infant God anew, for once again a new day is dawning.

As the beloved of God, we are being transformed. Ever mindful of his coming, we prepare for the long-awaited birth. Joyfully, we acknowledge the presence of Christ with us here and now, even as we watch and pray, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." +

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PRAYER

Lord Jesus, so that every person on this earth may know they are loved, we pray— Be born in us, be born in our world.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 12–17

Monday, Our Lady of Guadalupe:
Zec 2:14–17 or Rev 11:19a; 12:1–6a,
10ab / Lk 1:26–38 or Lk 1:39–47

Tuesday, St. Lucy:
Zep 3:1–2, 9–13 / Mt 21:28–32

Wednesday, St. John of the Cross:
Is 45:6c–8, 18, 21c–25 / Lk 7:18b–23

Thursday, Advent Weekday:
Is 54:1–10 / Lk 7:24–30

Friday, Advent Weekday:
Is 56:1–3a, 6–8 / Jn 5:33–36

Saturday, Advent Weekday:
Gn 49:2, 8–10 / Mt 1:1–17

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