

December 7, 2025



Daily Reflections

THE EARTH SHALL BE FILLED WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD

By David C. Robinson, SJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

A shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him: 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 his delight shall be the fear of the LORD. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted. ... Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. ... There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD, as water covers the sea.

ISAIAH 11:1-4, 6, 9

John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying,

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said: A voice of one crying out in the desert, Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. ... I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

MATTHEW 3:1-3, 11

Reflection

Each year as we begin our Advent journey, we are invited to discern the elements of our spiritual lives to which we hope to bring a heartfelt focus, enriching the depth and fullness of our walk-of-life with God and one another. Today's readings highlight the potential breadth and depth we can bring to the endeavor. In a world exhausted by a surfeit of political, social, and religious animosities, we might well feel incapable of bringing a substantial level of energy to what we choose. As we peruse the scriptures offered for our reflection, we might have an initial emotional uplift as we muse on the possibilities that faith can offer. Any sincere soul would naturally be magnetically drawn to a future of boundless spiritual generosity, compassion, and humility. Nonetheless, in short order reality asserts itself. As William Wordsworth remarked over 200 years ago—“The world is too much with us; late and soon.” He readily acknowledged the ways in which the demands of our days (often chosen rather than imposed!) can blunt our ‘greater angels’—our spiritual capacity to be other-focused and open to the inspiration of God’s love in our midst.

The Book of Isaiah maps the ebbs and flows of a people suspended in a world of political, military, and religious turmoil. The opening chapters chastise the moral laxity of the people—the corruption of rulers, the disparities of wealth and neglect of the poor, and the religious indifference of so many. Isaiah is quick to point out the impending doom that such disregard for God’s Covenant would bring, announcing the warfare and exile that would follow. However, the prophetic message does not end in despair. With a rhapsodic poem of grace, he assures the ultimate victory of God’s saving love for the people: “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.” The shadow of social chaos will ultimately give way to the radiance promised to the Chosen.

In the career of John the Baptist, Jewish society is under the reign of a domineering Roman government. Social and religious liberties are rigorously controlled. An anguished people yearn for a Messiah who would come with

power to tear down the shackles that bind them. John might well have prophesied a warrior leader who would crush the oppressors with the sword. However, his message is one of salvation and blessing. John calls on the people to “Prepare the way of the Lord.” The Messiah will not come to destroy an enemy, but rather to “baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.” Out of a landscape of despair, God will seed a garden of grace to welcome his people home.

We live in a world and a country where the threats of violence and domination are very real. We might feel justified in hoping for retribution and the forceful arrival of God’s justice. Yet, our Advent invitation is not simply to meet aggression with aggression. Ours is an anointing of hope and trust in God’s manifest love for us. We are missioned to seek justice and recompense for the neglected and oppressed. Yet, our anointing for the struggle is grounded in the ultimate joy of those who “seek the kingdom of God.” This is not a kingdom of control or a victory of power, but a kingdom of ultimate reconciliation, where the fruit of freedom is not a bitter harvest of subjugation, but the liberation of a common future nurtured in the timeless promise of a God who has loved us throughout time. This Advent, may we refresh our vocation of compassion and justice with the interior graciousness of soul that Jesus revealed throughout his life—firm in facing down the arrogant and selfish, but always proffering a hand of reconciling hope. May our Advent hope be an invitation to all to see that our true future is one of common discovery and the rebirth of a shared life in God.



Jesus in the Garden of the Reconciled
Image by David C Robinson, S.J.

For Pondering

- What are the greatest obstacles you face to a spirit of hope in these Advent days?
- Do you feel invited to hearken to the call of Isaiah and John the Baptist as you seek God in Advent prayer?
- How might you offer a hand of reconciliation to someone who once was close but now seems distant or hostile?

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