



School Sisters of Notre Dame

ADVENT WEEK 2

DECEMBER 10, 2017

INTRODUCTORY PRAYER—A call to intimacy with God

Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) PROSLOGION
(adapted for inclusive language)

“Come now, insignificant [one], leave behind for a time your preoccupations; seclude yourself for a while from your disquieting thoughts. Turn aside now from heavy cares and disregard your wearisome tasks. Attend for a while to God and rest for a time in [God].

“Enter the inner chamber of your mind; shut out all else except God and whatever is of aid to you in seeking [God]; after closing the chamber door, think upon your God. Speak now, my whole heart; speak now to God: I seek Your countenance; Your countenance, O Lord, do I seek. So come now, Lord my God, teach my heart where and how to seek You, where and how to find You.

“If You are not here, Lord where shall I seek You in Your absence? But if You are everywhere, why do I not behold You in Your presence? Surely You dwell in light inaccessible. Yet, where is this inaccessible light? Or how shall I approach unto a light inaccessible? Or who will lead me to and into this light so that in it I may behold You?”

REFLECTION

“Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to her. Proclaim to Jerusalem that her guilt is expiated.” (Is. 40: 1-2)

Who of us today is not in need of comfort, of the tenderness that this passage suggests? Winter cold nights are upon us as Christmas draws closer. For all but the children, Advent passes too quickly. Deadlines loom. At inopportune times computers crash with pending assignments. Friends and family gather and we want to be there and do too much. And we so entertained the hope that awareness of the coming of the Messiah would alleviate the pressures of our current responsibilities.

How rugged does life have to become before each of us realizes that problems are beyond our control? We need to call out at the top of our voices for God to come to our assistance, for a friend to extend help and join us in our tasks. Sometimes help comes through a work colleague who notices our duress, a family member whose burdens are lighter than ours, or whose generosity surpasses ours.

Help comes in veiled, disguised forms—a short passage from a church marquee, a one-liner from a story, film, or textbook; a smile from a total stranger, a child’s soft hand that stretches out to touch and be touched, a song on the car radio that swells to lift up our spirits, a traffic ticket that we could have gotten, but didn’t. Coincidence? No, for coincidence is God’s way of remaining anonymous.

“Fear not to cry out and say to the cities of Judah: ‘Here comes your God!’” With wide open arms, God will enfold me. Something or Someone is watching over me from another realm. Who sent to me the shepherd who will scoop me up into a warm bosom, my mother or grandmother, who passed years ago? My favorite saint whose virtues I too seldom imitate? I know, God, that you will send someone, just as you sent the Messiah two millennia ago. Make it soon, God, make it soon. *Maranatha*.

In the meantime, God, walk with me. In the words of the psalmist, you have promised that you will, “Bear me up, lest I dash my foot against a stone.” (Psalm 91: 11) and in (Psalm 46: 10), Sit with me, that I may experience the truth of your invitation to “Be still, and know that I am God”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. The references to comfort in the Isaiah Reading 40 parallel Psalm 131: 2, which is the image of child perfectly content in the words, “Like a weaned child on its mother’s lap, so is my soul within you.” Recall someone who brought you to this kind of contentment as: 1) a child, 2) a young person, 3) an adult. Stay with this gift in a stance of gratitude to God for that person.
2. One weakness in Christian theology is to focus too much on individual sin and miss collective sin. List wrongs in society today done by people whose sins need expiation. Pray that God, society, and you can forgive them.
3. What is the environment: a Christmas tree or crib scene? In which architecture do you best make contact with God? Realizing that *Emanuel* translates as, “God with us,” go to that place in your mind’s eye or in actuality and spend time with God-Emanuel.

Second Sunday of Advent

Lectionary: 5

READING 1 IS 40:1-5, 9-11

(<http://www.usccb.org/bible/isaiah/40:1>)

Comfort, give comfort to my people,
says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her
that her service is at an end,
her guilt is expiated;
indeed, she has received from the hand of the LORD
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

In the desert prepare the way of the LORD!
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill shall be made low;
the rugged land shall be made a plain,
the rough country, a broad valley.
Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Go up on to a high mountain,
Zion, herald of glad tidings;
cry out at the top of your voice,
Jerusalem, herald of good news!

Fear not to cry out
and say to the cities of Judah:

Here is your God!

Here comes with power
the Lord GOD,

who rules by his strong arm;
here is his reward with him,
his recompense before him.

Like a shepherd he feeds his flock;
in his arms he gathers the lambs,

carrying them in his bosom,
and leading the ewes with care.

Suggested Song: *Comfort, My People* by Ian Callanan:

<https://youtu.be/HSf9avmG4uM>

RESPONSORIAL PSALM PS 85:9-10-11-12, 13-14

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/psalms/85:9>

READING 2 2 PT 3:8-14

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/2peter/3:8>

GOSPEL MK 1:1-8

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/mark/1:1>