

December 13th – Sean Connor – Thursday of the Second Week of Advent

For the Saint Anselm Community, it's finals season again.

It's easy to get overwhelmed at the idea of four cumulative exams. Sometimes that anxiety leads us to forget the goodness and joy of our lives, Advent season and the love of Jesus Christ. But we always have hope. We have the hope that we will pass our finals, hope that Christmas is coming and the hope that God will show his mercy to us.

We learn from today's first reading and Gospel just how difficult the situation was for the Jewish community and the Kingdom of heaven; from the desperate search for water, to the violence of the Kingdom. The realization that John the Baptist is so small compared to the least in Heaven is a scary and disheartening one. Especially considering how the first reading uses words such as, "maggots" and, "worms," to describe people, it's incredibly easy to get discouraged about the human condition.

Yet, there's still hope. The first reading tells us that God will not forsake us, the responsorial psalm reminds us that the Lord is gracious and merciful. So long as we have love and God in our hearts and souls we can have a share in the Resurrection. This is that greatest hope that we aspire to.

This Advent, I pray that we all come a little closer to the Kingdom of God, I pray that we all receive a little of God's mercy but, above all, I pray for hope.

God bless us all.

Reading 1

Isaiah 41:13-20

I am the LORD, your God,
who grasp your right hand;
It is I who say to you, "Fear not,
I will help you."
Fear not, O worm Jacob,
O maggot Israel;
I will help you, says the LORD;
your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.
I will make of you a threshing sledge,
sharp, new, and double-edged,
To thresh the mountains and crush them,
to make the hills like chaff.
When you winnow them, the wind shall carry them off
and the storm shall scatter them.
But you shall rejoice in the LORD,
and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

The afflicted and the needy seek water in vain,
their tongues are parched with thirst.
I, the LORD, will answer them;
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.
I will open up rivers on the bare heights,
and fountains in the broad valleys;
I will turn the desert into a marshland,
and the dry ground into springs of water.
I will plant in the desert the cedar,
acacia, myrtle, and olive;
I will set in the wasteland the cypress,
together with the plane tree and the pine,
That all may see and know,
observe and understand,
That the hand of the LORD has done this,
the Holy One of Israel has created it.

Responsorial Psalm

PS 145:1 AND 9, 10-11, 12-13

R. (8) The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness.

I will extol you, O my God and King,
and I will bless your name forever and ever.

The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

R. The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness.

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.

Let them discourse of the glory of your Kingdom
and speak of your might.

R. The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness.

Let them make known to men your might
and the glorious splendor of your Kingdom.

Your Kingdom is a Kingdom for all ages,
and your dominion endures through all generations.

R. The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness.

Gospel

Matthew 11:11-15

Jesus said to the crowds:

"Amen, I say to you,
among those born of women
there has been none greater than John the Baptist;
yet the least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

From the days of John the Baptist until now,
the Kingdom of heaven suffers violence,
and the violent are taking it by force.
All the prophets and the law prophesied up to the time of John.
And if you are willing to accept it,
he is Elijah, the one who is to come.
Whoever has ears ought to hear."