

HOMILY FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR OF MARK

1. When we think of false gods or idols, certain images often come to mind
 - a. Perhaps we think of Zeus or Jupiter with the lightning bolts in their hands
 - b. May have hear of Venus and Cupid associated with love and sexuality
 - c. Perhaps we have heard of the Scandinavian gods like Thor and Woden
 - d. Names such as Thursday and Wednesday come from them
 - e. To modern ears the stories of these gods seems so fantastical that is easy to dismiss them
 - f. Even wonder how could people believe in them
 - g. Stories were meant to illustrate powerful forces in world that we fear but want to manipulate
 - h. Lightning bolts of Zeus and hammer of Thor symbolize the power of thunderstorms and weather that can give or take away life in a moment
 - i. Arrows of Cupid symbolize mysteriousness and power of sexual attraction, can seem so random yet so powerful
 - j. today's world takes away some of the romance using scientific sounding words such as weather and chemistry to describe these forces
 - k. We also know other powerful forces in our lives such as greed or ambition, fear or prideful conceit
 - l. We are attracted to these powerful forces because we seek to manipulate them for our happiness
 - m. Instead they can take over our lives destroying families and relationships
 - i. adultery, greed, conceit are features of soap operas and literature
 - ii. both attractive and destructive
 - n. the thing about these false idols is that they are demanding
 - i. take over our lives, making us think we have to give in to them for happiness even as they make us unhappy and ever more isolated
2. Isaiah announces a God who will come in a new way
 - a. He comes to bring us healing and freedom, not demanding submission
 - b. Isaiah promises us one who will bring us good news
 - c. This God will heal the broken-hearted, bring liberty to captives not just those in prison but even those caught in destructive addictions
 - d. This God is inviting us to celebrate and rejoice
 - e. He will clothe as if we were a bridegroom or bride going into a wedding
 - f. The party will be an earth abundant like a garden filled with plants springing up
3. Gospel of John introduces us to John the Baptist
 - a. Telling us the Baptist seems important if they send priests and levites to ask him who he is

- b. Ask are you the chosen one, are you prophet Elijah returned to earth
 - c. Are you the Prophet who will make us a great nation again
 - d. John the Baptist says I am none of these
 - e. I am a voice crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord
 - f. Then the Pharisees come and ask him: if you are not Christ or Elijah or the prophet why are you baptizing
 - g. He answers I baptize with water to prepare you for the great one who is coming
 - i. I am not worthy to bend down and untie his sandal
4. Today is the Sunday for rejoicing; St. Paul says Rejoice always, in every event give thanks
- a. At the first Christmas our God came into the world in Jesus
 - b. He is a God so powerful that He does not need to flaunt his power
 - c. He walks among the simple and ordinary people, healing their sick, promising them freedom and love of God
 - d. He witnesses to a love so expansive, that He is willing to go to His death
 - e. Will die not to be destroyed but to show that not even death can stop God from loving us
5. Just as Jesus came into the world to announce the world can be forgiven and renewed
- a. He also wants to come into our hearts
 - b. The Baptist and Isaiah are calling us to come to a party
 - c. We are invited to be the guests of honor, Jesus will crown us as bride or bridegroom
 - d. He calls us to a new experience of earth as being a garden full of life
6. To get to this new garden, to come to the party we still have to deal with the forces of the world
- a. The temptations of lust, greed, ambition, anger, impatience will still face us
 - b. But if we allow Jesus to walk with us we will find the road to this garden has been straightened, we will hear that voice crying out in the desert calling us home to God
 - c. We rejoice today that Jesus walks with us in this community of faith
 - d. He nourishes us with His body and blood
 - e. He offers us healing and a chance to renew ourselves in reconciliation
7. This can be a day of true joy and thanksgiving if we give ourselves to Jesus, to let him walk with us on our journey to the heavenly Father
- a. With Him the powers and forces of the world need not be frightening for they are subject to the power of His love