



3rd SUNDAY of ADVENT ***YEAR C – December 16, 2018***

The ancient romans had a pagan god called Janus. We get our word January from him. He is depicted in art as having a head with two faces. One face looks backward; the other looks forward.

The season of Advent is like that in a sense. It looks backward to the first coming of Jesus. It looks forward to the second coming of Jesus - either when we die or at the end of time.

You and I stand at the midpoint if you will, between these two great historical moments. Our job is not to sit on the hilltop passively, looking backward to the one and forward to the other.

Our job is to roll up our sleeves and complete the work that Jesus gave us to do at his first coming. In the practical order of things, what does that mean?

It means building up the kingdom of God in the part of the world in which we live.

It means filling our world with love rather than hate.

It means filling our world with forgiveness rather than resentment.

It means filling our world with truth rather than falsehood.

It means filling our world with compassion rather than cold indifference.

The prayer of St. Francis comes to mind:

"Lord, make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, let me bring pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy."

Francis understood the message of Jesus and he understood the meaning of Christmas. Imagine what our world would be like if, like him, we all practice what we preach.

The prophecies of Zephaniah in our first reading today (Zep 3:14-18B), would be fulfilled in our time. The way we act toward each other would be in accord with the advice we get from St. Paul in the second reading (Phil 4:4-7) And we would know what Jesus means when he says that the least of us in his kingdom, is greater than John the Baptist. He tells us in the gospel (Luke 3:10-18), what we must do if we want to follow Jesus.

John the Baptist had the spirit of Elijah. We have the spirit of Jesus. Elijah came back in the person of John. Jesus comes back in the person of each one of us, if we allow him to do that. We have one more week this year to prepare for his birthday. What gift will you bring him.

