

Advent Devotional December 15, 2020

Scripture

Isaiah 9:2-7

2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. 3 You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. 4 For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. 5 For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. 6 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Devotional

The Rev. Drew Himes LSW '13

As the Advent season dawns on us, we in the Northern hemisphere also enter a season of darkness: long nights and short days. For many, life also seems to enter a time of darkness as the year winds down. We look back over the year, when we lost so many and so many others are still without food or healthcare or adequate shelter. We see that so many are still mistreated because of their race, gender, or sexual orientation. We think back on opportunities missed and opportunities not taken, and our hearts are plunged into even greater darkness. We wonder about the justice of God and wonder when it will come to fulfillment.

Yet in the midst of this physical and mental darkness, the prophet Isaiah assures us of the coming of a great light: the light of a Savior, the light of a child, the birth of God with us. Our hope, we find out, is not built on human actions or human institutions. Instead, it is grounded in our God, who ventured to earth so many years ago to rescue us from every season of darkness: sin, death, separation, and sadness. Our God who overcame time and space to live with us as one of us brings great hope and joy even in these dark days of the year.

For the Israelite faithful, who also wondered when justice would be done to all those who had perverted God's reign, the coming of God's light into their midst would be an occasion of great rejoicing. The dark days of idol worship, selling out to foreign kings, and neglecting the voice of the God of Abraham, Miriam, David, and Ruth had to be a depressing state of affairs. But it was directly into the midst of that darkness that God's fullness entered and saved the people. It is right into the messiness of human affairs that God sends a sign of God's providential hope.

And so we cry out to our God: "Save us, save us from ourselves!" And it is directly into this darkness that the Christ child enters.

Prayer

God of grace and God of glory, incarnate in the flesh of our Christ, you bring hope to those who walk in great darkness and offer new life to all those who follow the beauty of your radiance. Grant us your presence in this season of dismal dark days, and move us forward with you to allow Christ to be born, once again, into us. Amen.