Spirituality
Pencil Preaching

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“Although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike” (Luke 10:21).

Isa 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24

The mystery of the Incarnation, God among us, is a revealed truth, not something we could know by reason. Yet, it is a truth so deeply deposited within our consciousness that we have always imagined it. Poets and mystics seeking to understand the nature and purpose of human life have repeatedly envisioned heroes sent to confront the tragedies and inequities of history and put the world right. The core stories of every culture are about the triumph of justice and love over suffering and even death.

The Prophet Isaiah envisions such a hero sent by God, a figure like David rising from the stump of Jesse, the great dynastic tree felled by defeat and humiliation, renewed life rooted in the promises of God’s covenant with Israel from the time of Abraham and the exodus from slavery in Egypt. This savior would restore justice, defeat evil and inaugurate a universal era of unity and peace. Even natural enemies would reconcile; the wolf and the lamb, the lion and the calf, the bear and the cow, and a little child would guide them. Isaiah dreams of God’s holy mountain as the focus of harmony, a signal to the nations announcing the divine will for all Creation.

Jesus embodied this promise in both his message and his person, demonstrating the power of love to reconcile divisions and heal the wounds inflicted by sin and death. Ultimate healing could only be the work of God, and Jesus' disciples gradually realize that he was more than a messenger, but God's grace present in the world, offering us a way forward to the beloved community that would fulfill the dream Isaiah and the other prophets had foretold.

In today's Gospel, Jesus lifts the veil, giving his disciples a glimpse of his relationship with God. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he rejoices that what God had hidden from the wise and learned was being revealed to the childlike. Beginning with his Baptism, the Gospels present a series of theophanies revealing Jesus' identity as the Christ, the Chosen One. Peter intuits this in the famous scene at Caesarea Philippi, the three disciples see Jesus transfigured. Even the crowds listening to Jesus preach and witnessing his miracles feel the power and know they are on holy ground in Jesus' presence. What the religious leaders refused to see, children, the poor, ordinary people grounded in life and still able to dream, would grasp.

The scripture readings this first week of Advent are inviting us to pay attention, to sharpen our spiritual eyesight, reach deep within our consciousness to reconnect with the dream of wholeness and harmony rooted in human nature by God's Spirit. Christmas is about God coming in the flesh. Blessed are the eyes that see it.

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