

1st Sunday of Advent, 27 November 2022

Scriptures: Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44

Homily: Fr. Ken

In the Gospel passage, we find Jesus drawing upon the story of Noah and the flood, to warn his disciples that they must be on their guard for the coming of the end of time.

It may appear to be a harsh judgment by comparison: Were all the people of Jesus' time as evil as the people of Noah's time?

Here it is instructive to reflect for a moment upon how in times of war ordinary people can lose sight of their own humanity and the humanity of others.

Most people do not live their lives in such extreme circumstances. But how many could say that they act in a fully human manner each and every moment of their individual lives? When we look into the faces of those who are suffering, are we truly able to say we respond fully in love to the humanity of others?

Each of us needs help to heal our damaged humanity, and to grow as human persons. God our Creator gave us this help by sending Jesus Christ into the world to be one like us.

In the season of Advent, which starts today, we prepare ourselves for his coming by living sober, watchful lives. This watchfulness is itself Christ's gift, since he comes to say to each one of us: I care for you and I love you.

Our watchfulness is the beginning of our acceptance of his care and his love, as he invites us to cooperate in the task of our own healing, so that through his grace we overcome all that dehumanizes us.

In the extreme suffering of his own life, Jesus Christ—our brother—teaches us what it truly means to be human.

His cross saves our humanity and transforms it in love, so, as we wait for his coming, we are filled with hope in the promise of a restored humanity destined to shine in glory when he comes again.

Advent, then, is a time when we are called to reflect upon the things in our lives that make us less human. Such reflection can be painful when it brings to mind those things that we have done—or that have been done to us—which have damaged our humanity.

In order to find peace and healing, it is important to see that there is one who cares for us and loves us no matter what we have done or what has been done to us. All we are asked to do is to accept his help and cooperate with his transforming love.

This does not mean that all the effects of our damaged humanity will be healed overnight. We are complex creatures and the healing of our wounds and emotions takes time, and perhaps will never be complete in this life. Nor does it mean we should not find appropriate human help for our problems whether through professionals or through friends and family. But at the deepest level of our existence, the coming again of Jesus Christ into this world enables us to live in hope that humanity will be healed and transformed through the love of Jesus Christ.

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