

Fr. Romeo Evangelista's Homily
December 8, 2019
Second Sunday of Advent (A)

Once there was a newspaper cartoon that showed several lions and lambs living contentedly in the same pen. Outside the pen was a caption which read: "Peaceful co-existence". The owner was asked how he achieved this remarkable result. "Oh, quite easily", he replied. "Each day I just throw in a few more lambs". Though a parody of the prophecy of Isaiah in today's first reading, namely, "The wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them," the cartoon illustrates the kind of peace among people that the Prince of Peace will bring to the world.

In Isaiah's time, Ahaz of the house of David was king. He was a weak leader and as such brought Judah to ruins. The people longed for a leader who would restore the country to peace and prosperity. Comparing the ruined country to the stump of a tree, Isaiah prophesized that God will bring out a shoot from the tree's stump, a prince, who will fulfill the people's expectations. He will rule with justice and righteousness and thus bring about peace in the land. Finally, he will stand as a banner for the peoples: the nations will rally to him.

The Jews in Jesus' time were familiar with this prophecy. Yet, when Jesus finally came as its fulfillment, they refused to recognize him. This despite the fact that the Father chose John the Baptizer to be his Son's herald to prepare the people for his coming and to point him out to them when he would start his ministry. John's message to the people was simple yet profound, repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand! This should be the spirit that should prevail among us during this season of Advent.

If Advent is the time for preparing ourselves for the coming of Jesus into the world and into our hearts, then the message of Advent should be: "This is the season for praying". For what? For conversion, for a change of mind and heart about what is important in life. In short, to place our spiritual homes in order. How? We should become more reflective. We begin to assess our past and see how we have grown, or how we have just stayed the same, or, sad of

all, how we have even regressed into something worse than we were before. Looking at our experiences we know there are many things that need to be set straight. How we wish we can love all over again. How we wish we can rewrite some of our experiences and relationships in life.

Advent and Christmas actually offer us hope. Isaiah speaks of a vision of a new world and a new life. John the Baptist tells us that the key to this newness is conversion: Reform your lives! Prepare for the coming of the Lord! Allow change to happen within you!

Let us become better persons, better parents, better children, better Christians. God has a beautiful plan for all of us. His design is excellent life at home, at work, in our world, and everywhere. But we need to receive these gifts with a changed mind and heart. Let us pray that change may happen to us as we go through our Advent pilgrimage of faith. Then our hearts will be ready for Jesus on Christmas Day. Then the peace of the Prince of Peace will be ours which we can then pass on to others. Then the much awaited peace in the world may become a reality.