**REAL PEACE IN AN ANGRY WORLD, IS. 9:6, 7, MIC. 5:2, 4, 5, ZECH. 9:10, LK. 2:14, RO. 5:1-8, DEC. 10/23.**

Last week during the 1st Sunday of Advent we heard the prophets giving us assurances of hope. Yet we discovered that left to ourselves, our plight is indeed hopeless. Bu t the Good News of the Gospel is that God has no intention of leaving us that way unless we insist on going it on our own.

**For while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us** (Ro. 5:8). Christ didn’t say, “Go get your life in order, then come back & see me.” He took us just as we are but loved us so much so as not leave us as He found us. **Each of us is a work in progress** under God’s tutelage.

**Nor is our suffering in vain**. Paul reminds us in Ro. 5:3-5 that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character, & character, hope. **And hope does not disappoint us** because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.

In Ps. 62 **David says,** “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him.

**Jeremiah**, speaking God’s words said: “For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you & not to harm you, **plans to give you hope & a future.** Then you will call on Me & come & pray to Me & I’ll listen to you. You’ll seek Me & find Me when you seek Me with all your heart.”

And once more from **Jeremiah** (La. 3:19-23) “I remember my affliction & my wandering, the bitterness & the gall. I well remember them & my soul is downcast within me. **Yet this I call to mind therefore I have hope**: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

**So beloved, we can be joyful in hope**, patient in affliction, fervent in prayer (Ro. 12:12).

**Paul** says (Ro. 15): **“May the God of hope fill you** with all joy & peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Hope, you see, does not depend on us. It is a gift & a promise from God.

Today, **the 2nd Sunday of Advent, focuses on peace**. Now I know we had a message on peace back on Remembrance Day, but today I want to speak about our inner self. Just as much as we live in a hopeless world when we depend on ourselves, so too, **we live in an angry world**, don’t we? Not that you likely need any convincing, but just think about the latent anger out there. I was doing a return at Canadian Tire & there was a sign at a counter saying that the employees there are entitled to work in a safe environment & that swearing & raising of voices & other insults would result in removal from the store & a report to the police. Now you have to wonder, unless you’ve worked with the public, why is there even a need for such a sign, except that there have been enough incidents in the past to warrant its presence.

I’ve had lots of conversations over the years about how great life is up here (and it is) & how miserable life is in the city (which it isn’t). The fact of the matter is I love being In the city as much as I love being here. But there’s a better way of phrasing it. I love being wherever I am. The Highlands is remarkably beautiful. And the city has many beautiful things to enjoy to the full. But I will certainly concede that when I return to the city I’m struck by how much traffic there is! I confess that I prefer the traffic jams up here of 4 cars to toughing it out on the DVP! **I remember** when the city was fairly quiet. If you used to live there, do you remember when you used to hear a car horn & it was to warn you of danger? Now you can’t go for 5 minutes without hearing someone honking their car horn because someone else isn’t doing what they think they should be doing. People go from 0 to 100 on the anger scale in 2 seconds. Worse, they do it acting like it’s the natural thing, the right thing to do--& it’s their right to act so.

**It’s an angry world**. It may find expression in how you’re spoken to at work, or how someone assumes the right to take your—parking spot, groceries buggy or jumps in front of you driving down the lane that ends for everyone except the driver who wheels in front of you like he owns the road. It’s hard to have any sense of inner calm or peace in such an atmosphere. And if you look to television to get a reprieve from the world, you see program after program—some of it political, where people just seem to delight in attacking, provoking or otherwise trying to insult or demean another person. What a world! Are you like Job, crying “I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil?”

**How do you get inner peace?** No surprise: this too comes through Jesus. Well, how so?

**What does God tell us?** Ps. 37:11 says the meek, not the pushy, will inherit the land & enjoy great peace.” It’s from that passage that **Jesus** stated 1 of the beatitudes: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” **James** adds (3:18) “Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.” **Gideon** built an altar to the Lord & called it “The Lord is Peace” (Jd. 6:24). In fact, the Lord put on David & his descendants (that would be us!) the Lord’s peace forever (1 K. 2:33)!

**In the OT** there are over 300 prophesies that point directly to Christ. It’s hard to imagine people missing this. Isaiah has so many beautiful passages that tell of Christ’s coming & how it will happen. But Jesus is described in the 9th chapter as “Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father & **Prince of Peace**.” **Later, Isaiah reveals the key to accessing this peace**: **“If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea**” (48:18). Did you get that? Let peace flood over you just by listening to God’s leading! Wow! And in chapter 53 that describes Jesus’ crucifixion, we’re told “He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; **the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, & by His wounds we are healed.”**

**Micah** is the prophet who foretells that Jesus will be born in Bethlehem. And that prophecy ends with “And He (that would be **Jesus) will be their peace**.” Peace is simply interwoven with Jesus. t’s in the centre of His arrival on Palm Sunday. The prophet **Zachariah** foretold, when He would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey: “He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend…to the ends of the earth (9:10b).”

And **Luke** brings us into the NT with the announcement of Jesus’ birth as the great company of the heavenly host praise God, saying, “**Glory to God in the highest, & on earth peace to all people** on whom His (Jesus’) favour rests.” It’s a refrain that’s repeated by the throngs of people at His triumphal entry on Palm Sunday on His way to the cross: “Peace in heaven & glory in the highest (Lk. 19:38)”.

**Jesus is the owner of peace**. “**Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you**. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don’t let your hearts be troubled & do not be afraid (Jn. 14:27).” And a little later He says, **“I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace**. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world (16:33).”

**Jesus, Jesus, Jesus gives us peace!** Listen to **Paul** in Ro. 5: “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And in ch. 8 he says, “the mind of sinful man is death but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life & peace.”

**Beloved, are you anxious?** Take rest in Jesus. Take refuge in Him. He says,

“Come to Me all you who are weary & burdened, & I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you & learn from Me, for I am gentle & humble of heart & you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy & my burden is light (Mt. 11:28-30).”

**This rest for your souls is nothing less than the inner peace that every one of us yearns for. It is yours for the asking**. It’s amazing that when you let the peace of Christ dwell in you, rule in you—that’s why we pass the peace at Communion—you cannot be shaken by an angry world. You see, Christ calls us to peace because He is the Prince of Peace. Share that peace with everyone you meet this week.