

## HOMILY 2<sup>ND</sup> SUN ADVENT YRA 2019

According to God's plan for creation, a Democratic congress person and a Republican congress person will talk to one another and really listen and understand and make decisions for the good of our country. People of all organized religions of the world will work together to promote love and peace. Heterosexual and LGBTQ people will stop judging each other and treat each other with the dignity and respect that they deserve as human persons. I added just a few groups to the groups that Isaiah listed in the first reading today. He names groups with a history of animosity, and that animosity is broken down. The wolf will be the guest of the lamb and the baby shall play by the cobra's den. These animosities that seem deeply ingrained, almost genetic are broken down.

I think what is at the very heart of the conflict between people is that we do not believe that we are all equal and that we are all equally loved by God. We may believe that intellectually and we may say that, but I do not think we always believe that deep down. And that seems to be a reaction ingrained in us, to see people as unequal or less loved by God, especially when we feel threatened or afraid. The good news is that if we recognize this in ourselves we can change. We can use our free will that was given to us by God when he created us in his own image and likeness. We can use that free will that God allows us to exercise to do good. In the Gospel reading John the Baptist calls us to repent. Part of repentance is recognizing our limitations. Part of repentance is recognizing and admitting when we are wrong. Part of repentance is having a change of heart. But the most important part of repentance is changing our behavior. We need to walk down a different path than we have been walking down.

Our theme for advent this year is "Make Room for Jesus." We need to make room for Jesus in all of our relationships. What that means is letting the love of Jesus into all of our

relationships. The truth of that love will point you in the right direction. The truth is that love is more powerful than anything else.

Do you really believe that all people are created equal? Do you really believe that all people are equally loved by God? Does your behavior reflect that belief? The way we can change our view of others is to have a better understanding of who they are. And we gain a better understanding through having conversations with them. Nothing is going to change if we just focus upon what someone else should do. Nothing is going to change if we avoid having the difficult conversations. Nothing is going to change if we just fight and are at war with each other. War never decides who is right, only who is left. Nothing is going to change if our relationships are just about avoiding conflict. This is how you can make the difficult conversations a little easier. When you have the conversation do not judge the other individual. Do not condemn the other individual. Do not try and change the other individual. Try to gain a better understanding of the individual. You will gain a new point of view. You may even change the way you think and what you believe. You may be able to break down the animosity that exists between the two of you. If you change the way you relate to someone, they may change the way they relate to you. We can have a better world and I think it begins one relationship at a time.

Do you believe that all people are equal? Do you believe that God loves everyone equally? Do you believe in the dignity of all human people from the moment of conception to the time of natural death? When our behavior does not reflect that belief, we need to repent, acknowledge that we are wrong, have a change of heart and change our behavior. Make room for the love of Jesus in that relationship and that love that is stronger than anything else will guide you. Make room for Jesus.