

Second Sunday of Advent

December 7, 2025

The glory of God.

Spirit of the Lord on us.

Repent and believe.

-rvb.

Note: His literary style – Angelus writes Epigrams, a favorite form of expression during the 16th and 17TH centuries. The Epigram is a brief, kind of poetic satire dealing with a simple matter. The conclusion is significant in that it always turns out to be contrary to what we expect and is where sharp wit comes together at the end. -Joseph Schmidt.

A collage of Incarnational manifestations by Angelus Silesius.

1. **To the Shepherd** – “Answer, my dear people, what was it you sang when you entered the stable and with a trembling tongue adored your God, a child? I would like to sing a pastoral of praise to Jesus, my King.”
2. **God immersed in Humanity** – “God drinks humanity’s milk, leaves His divinity’s wine. How could He then not be immersed in our human nature?”
3. **It carries and is carried** – “The Word who carried all, the very God carries a little girl and boy in arms enfolded with love.”

4. **The Best Hymn of Praise** – “Chant, all you angels, chant! With hundreds of thousand tongues to this most blessed Child is scarcely homage done. Oh! If I only were without a voice and tongue, I know that I could sing straightway the sweetest song.”

5. **He in Me, I in Him.** “Know, God becomes a child, lies in the Virgin’s womb, that I would grow like Him, His Godhead may assume.”

6. **God becomes us.** “Reflect! God becomes us, entering earth’s hardships, that I enter His realm and may become as He.”

Monday - December 8 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Genesis 3:9-15, 20 – In Genesis chapters 1-12, the story unfolds in three stages:

creation (1-2), “Peace to the earth, airy space, heavens, waters, plants, trees, animals, birds, and fish.”

uncreation (3-11), “With this peace the dreadful I now appease, with this peace the cruel I now appease, and with this peace all evil I now appease.”

and **re-creation** (12). “So that peace may prevail, happiness prevails; may everything be peaceful for us; the Son of Peace breathe into us His Peace and His Spirit.” -Atharva Veda XIX.

Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12. There are two sections: chapters 1-3, doctrinal – the call of the ministry of the Church; and chapters 4-6, practical – the

earthly conduct of the Church. In essence, doctrinal and practical - “I am called to be a walking sermon.”-St. Francis.

Luke 1:26-38 – Mary said, “Let if **BE** done to me as you say.” BE willing to share your joys; BE willing to share the sorrows of others; BE a leader when you see a path others have missed; BE the first to congratulate another who has succeeded; BE the last to criticize a colleague who fails; BE love to those who love you; BE kind to those who do not like you, and win them over with your kindness. Above all, BE yourself. -Anon. Just to BE is Blessed, and to Live is Holy. -Rabbi Heschel.

“It is in Him that we live, move, and have our being.” Acts 17:28.

Blessings upon you and your loved ones.

Roger J. Vanden Busch.

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Reading 1

[Isaiah 11:1-10](#)

On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse,
and from his roots a bud shall blossom.

The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him:
a spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
a spirit of counsel and of strength,
a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD,
and his delight shall be **the fear of the LORD.**

Not by appearance shall he judge,
nor by hearsay shall he decide,
but he shall judge the poor with justice,
and decide aright for the land's afflicted.
He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.

**Justice shall be the band around his waist,
and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.**

Then 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 cow and the bear shall be neighbors,
together their young shall rest;
the lion shall eat hay like the ox.

The baby shall play by the cobra's den,
and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair.

**There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD,**
as water covers the sea.

On that day, the root of Jesse,
set up as a signal for the nations,
the Gentiles shall seek out,
for his dwelling shall be glorious.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

Isaiah proclaims, “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of knowledge, and of respect for the Lord” which are some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

This scripture reading from Isaiah completes the Emmanuel trilogy (Isaiah 7,9, and 11). Isaiah paints a portrait of the ideal Davidic king. His

qualities (wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, respect for the Lord – a litany of the gifts of the Holy Spirit) will be legion – “The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.” David will be a king who is concerned about peace, social justice exhibiting a strong and steady leadership, fashioning a dream world including Jew and Gentile. His vision will be universal in scope. My mind takes me back to the football and basketball games at Abbot Penning High School and the thunderous cheer – “We have spirit, how about you!” Such a cheer we are challenged to chant during Advent.

This reading is especially music to the ears of the Israelites who had experienced a “bad” batch of Davidic kings. Isaiah gives the reader the five P’s of a king: 1. The king’s Pedigree; 2. The Power he will exhibit by his reign; and 3. The Peace he will establish which will be Progressive and Permanent.

Responsorial Psalm

[Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17](#)

R. (cf. 7) **Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.**

O God, with your judgment endow the king,
and with your justice, the king's son;
he shall govern your people with justice
and your afflicted ones with judgment.

R. **Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace forever.**

Justice shall flower in his days,

and profound peace, till the moon be no more.

May he rule from sea to sea,

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace forever.

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,

and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.

He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;

the lives of the poor he shall save.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace forever.

May his name be blessed forever;

as long as the sun his name shall remain.

In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed;

all the nations shall proclaim his happiness.

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace forever.

Reading 2

Romans 15:4-9

Brothers and sisters:

Whatever was written previously was written for our instruction,
that by endurance and by the encouragement of the Scriptures
we might have hope.

**May the God of endurance and encouragement
grant you to think in harmony with one another,
in keeping with Christ Jesus,
that with one accord you may with one voice
glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you,
for the glory of God.

For I say that Christ became a minister of the circumcised
to show God's truthfulness,
to confirm the promises to the patriarchs,
but so that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

As it is written:

*Therefore, I will praise you among the Gentiles
and sing praises to your name.*

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

Paul encourages the Roman community “to live in perfect harmony with one another according to the spirit of Christ Jesus...” The spirit, vision, and message of Isaiah and the entire Old Testament are tied together in this second reading from Romans. In verses 5-33, we are given an Old Testament overview. God is a God of patience, consolation, hope, and peace. The glory of God is manifested in truth through the power of the Spirit. Jesus is the basis for our hope. We are to be members of one body. We are challenged to help, support, admonish, minister, and pray for one another. The ideal world is within our reach. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Davidic kings. He is the source of: “Inner peace – I am at peace no matter where I am; Strength – The strength of God moves through me in every breath; Gratitude – All that I say and do is an expression of gratitude; Prosperity – I have more than enough, and I am grateful; and World Peace – I dedicate my Christ light to a world that is safe for everyone.” -Spirituality and Health, November/December. 2025.

Alleluia

[Luke 3:4, 6](#)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths:
all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 3:1-12

John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!**" It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said: *A voice of one crying out in the desert, Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.*

John wore clothing made of camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. **I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

In the Gospel of Matthew, John the Baptist is the link between two testaments. He is a flaming herald and a shaker and mover of our potential complacency. His challenging words are “Repent!” for he believed it was fundamental to the life of a Christian as demonstrated by one’s conduct and public witness. “You brood of vipers! Give some evidence that you mean to reform.” He also gave evidence of his humility, “I am not worthy to carry his sandals.” Theologian, John Shea poetically muses about John the Baptist being aware of both his strength and his impotence. “I can denounce a king, but I cannot enthrone one. I can strip an idol of its power, but I cannot reveal the true God. I can wash the soul in sand, but I cannot dress it in white. I can devour the word of the Lord like wild honey, but I cannot lace his sandal. I can condemn sin, but I cannot bear it away. Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.”

Napoleon once commented, “The sword and the spirit are the two mightiest forces in the world, yet the spirit is the mightiest of the two.” The spirit is used to refer to the animating principle of life. We are familiar with team spirit, the spirit of the law in contrast to the letter of

the law, a spirited debate, school spirit, and the spirit of Pentecost. The theologian, Martin Buber captures the Spirit of Advent, “The ones who count are those persons who, though they may be of little renown, respond to and are responsible for the continuation of the living Spirit.” May the Spirit of Advent be a living and animating force in our lives, moving us beyond the normal confines of life to a sense of wholeness and holiness or to be “wholly holy.”

Today’s scriptural readings highlight the movement and power of the Spirit within us; let us “prepare the way of the Lord” with Life, Laughter, and Love.

Life: As human beings who strive to find meaning and hope in our lives more than just survival or meeting our physical needs, we would do well to listen to the words of Anne Frank as quoted from her diary: “Everyone has inside a piece of good news. The good news is that you do not know how great you can be! How much you can love! How much you can accomplish! And what your potential is!”

From time to time as I was walking down the hallway at school, and an acquaintance would pass by with the normal, habitual greeting, “Roger, how are you doing?” Instead of the usual mindless and superficial response, I will stop and say, “The last time I checked, I was doing fine. Ninety-six percent of happiness is good health, and the other 4% is grit and/or gravy.” I wonder what the person thought, “why

did I ask?” Without good health and a cheerful outlook, our lives can become burdensome, troubled, painful, and distracting. How does one mend the mind and mind the body so life is more positive, meaningful, and energized? How does one avoid the unannounced slings and arrows that negatively affect our physical and mental health? They are neglect, abuse, death of a loved one, disease or disability, divorce, depression, loneliness, poor role modeling, and the list is endless. Some of the antidotes are exercise, sunlight, support, mindset change, seeking assistance, avoiding manipulation, keeping one’s distance, not blaming oneself, seeking understanding, not taking sides, asking questions, seeking wisdom, building one’s character, avoiding the pity pot, proving oneself to others, learning self-care, grieving, facing reality, seeking support, and blessing and praying for others.

Laughter: I offer you a challenge, that is, develop your own creed on humor, laughter, and life. Here are a few for a starter as a “hamburger helper” (chuckle) – I will use humor for positive, uplifting, and loving purposes; I will take myself lightly, and my work lightly serious; I will learn to laugh at myself and my mistakes in life; I will laugh with others and not at others. I remember when I was in Sr. Felicia’s music class. My friend, Stinky and I were not paying attention. I was called out by her, and she said, “Roger, what kind of heel are you?” I thought for a moment and said, “A rubber heel!” Everyone laughed except Sr. Felicia. Since then, I have matured and appreciate life, love, and laughter a hundred-fold.

Of course, when we laugh chemicals happily spill over into our blood, and we experience a feeling of transcendence because nothing else matters at

that moment. Some of these happy chemicals are endorphins (natural opiates), Dopamine (mood elevates); Serotonin (relaxed feeling), and Norepinephrine (energy). Dr. William Fry Jr. offers five dimensions of laughter and humor: 1. They heal the body by giving the lungs a hardy workout akin to 6 minutes of jogging. They lower muscle tension and blood pressure while boosting the immune system; 2. They improve intelligence and creative thinking because it stimulates the imagination. They improve the world around you; 3. Humor and laughter bond relationships and help us cope with tragedy and loss. They improve morale and team building while making conversation interesting and fun while keeping life in perspective; 4. They enhance one's self-esteem and enable you to laugh at your goofs and mistakes. They enable you to see life's absurdities and increase your level of confidence. The author offers a caution that we should laugh with others and not at others, thus we are avoiding sarcasm, ridicule, ethnic remarks, put-downs, hostility, cynicism, contempt, and insensitivity; 5. Laughter and humor enhance learning and its retention and understanding. They decrease test anxiety levels, avoid behavioral problems. The shortest distance between two people is a sense of humor and laughter.

Love: The Power of Love

A letter from Albert Einstein to his daughter explaining the most powerful force – LOVE.

Einstein wrote that "Love is a powerful force that science has not found a formal explanation for. It is a force that includes and governs all

others and is even behind any phenomenon operating in the universe and has not yet been identified by us. This universal force is LOVE.

When scientists looked for a theory of the universe they forgot the most powerful unseen force. Love is Light, that enlightens those who give and receive it. Love is gravity because it makes some people feel attracted to others. Love is power, because it multiplies the best we have, and allows humanity not to be extinguished in their blind selfishness.

Love unfolds and reveals. For love we live and die. Love is God and God is Love. This force explains everything and gives meaning to life. This is the variable that we have ignored for too long, maybe because we are afraid of love because it is the only energy in the universe that man has not learned to drive at will. We arrive at the conclusion that love is the most powerful force there is, because it has no limits.

Each of us carries within a small but powerful generator of love whose energy is waiting to be released. When we learn to give and receive this universal energy of love we will have affirmed that love conquers all, is able to transcend everything and anything, because love is the quintessence power of life.”

Final prayer – From all eternity, Father, your Spirit surrounds and sustains us and graces us with wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and respect to live in harmony with the Spirit of the Risen Lord. Amen.

Blessings upon you and your loved ones. Roger J. Vanden Busch