

Homily
Friday of the 2nd Week of Advent
December 15, 2023

Who is familiar with the Liturgy of the Hours? The LOTH's is the second greatest liturgical prayer, second only to the Mass. As with the Mass, in the LOTH's, we pray together with the whole universal church, praying the same prayers with the same intentions. We can go to any church throughout the world and today's Mass will be the same as all Masses celebrated today. Yes, my homily will be better than most, but the readings are the same, the liturgical season is the same. The same goes for the LOTH's.

Priests take a vow to pray the entire LOTH's throughout the day. We deacons take a vow to pray morning and evening prayer. All God's faithful are encouraged to pray the LOTH's. This is the prayer of God's people, the prayer that binds us all as family, just as does the Mass.

The wisdom of the Church is a marvel to behold. But it's no surprise since Jesus Himself is the Head of the Church, and we, as members of His Body, in alignment to His Will, celebrate together, mourn together, support each other in each liturgical season, with the same intentions for the day. We live day by day, as ordained by God; "give us today our daily bread."

In the first reading, Isaiah tells us that God teaches us what we need to know and leads us in the way we should go. In doing so, we will prosper greatly. Sounds like a good idea. Then why don't I? Why don't we all?

Matthew in today's Gospel relays the comparison Jesus makes between that generation and children who don't join with each other when they celebrate and when they mourn. He goes further to describe how John the Baptist abstained from drink and many creature comforts, while Jesus Himself ate and drank. The similarity is clear: John's mission was to prepare the way, just as we are called in the season of Advent to prepare ourselves for Christ's coming by fasting and prayer, and Jesus, being with us, is cause for celebrating, feasting, and communion with all our brothers and sisters, even sinners. And aren't we all sinners?

The wisdom of the church provides for us, as the family of God, joined together in one Body, one Spirit, the seasons to help us on our journey. Today and for all the season of Advent, we are called to pray, to fast, and to prepare ourselves for Christ's coming, both in the manger, and, most importantly, in judgement.

In a few moments, we will pray together the petitions for this Mass, then we will pray the Eucharistic prayer together with the priest. We will then receive Him Who desires to be with us and finally pray after communion in thanksgiving for His coming to us, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, and for His continued teaching for our benefit.

In Mass, with the LOTH's, by the Holy Rosary, through the intercession of the angels and saints, in our personal and intimate prayer with our God, may this season of Advent bring us closer to God and to each other as we all travel towards our eternal reward.