

Reading for Weekday in the First Week of Advent

4th December 2024

First reading

Isaiah 25:6-10a

‘The Lord will make a feast, and he will wipe away tears from all faces.’

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.
He will swallow up death for ever;
and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.
It will be said on that day,
‘Behold, this is our God;
we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the Lord; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.’
For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 23(22):1-3a. 3b-4. 5. 6. R1

*In the Lord’s own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending.*

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me;
he revives my soul.
He guides me along the right path,
for the sake of his name.
Though I should walk in the valley of the shadow of death,
no evil would I fear, for you are with me.
Your crook and your staff will give me comfort.
You have prepared a table before me
in the sight of my foes.
My head you have anointed with oil;
my cup is overflowing.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life.
In the Lord’s own house shall I dwell
for length of days unending.

Gospel Acclamation

Is33:22

Alleluia, alleluia.

Behold, the Lord will come to save his people.

Blessed are those who are ready to meet him.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 15:29-37

Jesus healed many people and multiplied the loaves of bread.

At that time: Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them, so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 'I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.' And the disciples said to him, 'Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?' And Jesus said to them, 'How many loaves do you have?' They said, 'Seven, and a few small fish.' And directing the crowd to sit down on the ground, he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over.

Short reflection on the reading for today

Elevated ground features in both of our readings today. In the first reading, the prophet speaks of a mountain where the Lord invites all to a great banquet. There will rich food and fine wines, and all mourning, sadness and shame will be removed, and even death itself will be destroyed. Here is a vision which lifts us beyond the world as we know it towards another world where all is as God wants it to be. Jesus goes up the mountainside and large crowds go up there after him. There in the heights of Galilee, Jesus gives speech to the dumb, mobility to the lame, sight to the blind. He goes on to feed the hungry with very limited resources. He feeds them so well that all ate as much as they wanted, and, even then, there were seven baskets full left over. The vision of Isaiah in the first reading becomes something of a reality in the gospel. Both readings speak to us of a God who wants us to have life and to have it to the full. It was Saint Irenaeus who said that the glory of God is the human person fully alive. In the gospel, the Lord needed others to bring the sick to him; he needed the disciples to help him feed the crowd. He continues to need us if his life-giving work is to get done. Advent calls on all of us to be instruments of the Lord's life-giving and healing presence in the world. In Advent we pray, "Come Lord Jesus." We also offer ourselves as channels for the Lord's coming.