

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent  
December 2, 2018  
“Our Only True and Lasting Home”

Jer 33:14-16

1 Thess 3:12 – 4:2

Lk 21:25...36

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Every normal person wants a home. We all want a place we can truly call “home”. We want a place that is danger free – a place where we can live without fear or anxiety. We want a place where we can live in peace with our loved ones – And a place where we can relate to others with mutual respect, honor, and even love!

This desire and wish is embedded in the psyche of every person who has ever lived – whether they lived in a cave, a hovel, a mansion, or a castle. And it is the hope for this place called “home” that drives most of what we do, whether we realize it or not!

The Chosen People longed for this place called “home”. It became theirs, geographically, in the Promised Land. It was also directly and intimately tied to their relationship with God. However, it was secure only as long as they maintained that relationship in faithfulness.

Today, Jeremiah speaks to the Chosen People who had been dispersed to Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt. Speaking for God, he assures them that, someday, they will possess and enjoy a “New Jerusalem”. It will be their true home forever. Moreover, they will be safe and secure there because of someone God would send to be their leader and lawgiver. We know now, of course, that Jeremiah was speaking of Jesus Christ.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is speaking of the “End Time”. But he might also be speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70AD. That horrific orgy of slaughter after starvation was the end of everyone who remained in besieged Jerusalem. It was the end of any home anyone there thought they could have in this life!

Fortunately, the Christians who were there escaped beforehand. They took seriously the prescient warning of Jesus. Because of their relationship with Jesus and God in their hearts, they were not ensnared by carousing and drunk behavior. Nor were they so immersed in their own fears and anxieties that they missed the signs of the times and impending doom! They were vigilant and they prayed. They were able to stand steadfast in their fidelity, commitment, and love for Jesus and for God – and they escaped!

Brothers and Sisters, the only true and safe place that we can ever call “home” in this life is in our inner self – in our heart and soul. The world around us never seems to change. Despite our best efforts, the world is still filled with chaos, destruction, uncertainty, anxiety, exiles, refugees – and the unjust slaughter of millions. Those with wealth and power believe that these very things guarantee them a home.

But they are wrong – They are not at peace. Moreover, the way they use their power, and the way they behave toward others, gives the lie to what is really in their hearts and spirits.

Finally, in his First Letter to the Thessalonians, St. Paul teaches us that the only way to have an interior home, now, is in our undivided commitment to Jesus and to the Father who sent him. We must learn to live with love for all others and for God. Furthermore, we truly prove our love for God by the way we treat everyone with whom we have contact. This means growing in unselfishness as we attempt to treat others as we would treat Jesus himself. It means behaving toward them, as Jesus and the Father behave toward us in all things!

Advent is the time when we prepare our hearts for the birth of Jesus. In him we can truly find a home now. And it is he, alone, who leads us to the only true, safe, and everlasting home that we can ever have.

So, let us pray, that in God’s eternity, we arrive possessing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in our deepest selves!

Amen.

December 2, 2018

Monsignor Russell G. Terra