

Small Groups

Discussion Questions for December 6, 2015 – The Second Sunday of Advent

God is coming and He is waiting and He is loving and He is here. At the start of this Second week of Advent, the readings are about God's mercy, justice and love. We are reminded that no matter how much we screw up, no matter how many times we turn from God, no matter how attached we get to things that are bad for us, God is the one who prompts us to come back to him. And he is ready to receive us with the kind of all-encompassing love that is displayed by the dad in the story of the prodigal son. God tells us, like he told the Jews before Christ, "I'm not interested in your ritualistic sacrifices; I want to see a softening of your heart". God, out of love, made us for the sole reason to love. He didn't make us so we could impress him with the number of prayers or offerings we can give him. Although praying and almsgiving are important, without a loving heart that shows its love through action, they are no more than a banging symbol making noise but no music. Let's make beautiful music this week with our acts of love: forgive the hurts and give until it hurts.

Discussion Questions

1. Looking back on the week, how have you set your plans in motion for the coming of Jesus?
2. St Paul asks us to love and to pray. He's suffering in prison, yet he's thinking of others and asking us to be pure and blameless. What does this mean in our current world – to be pure and blameless? Are we? How do we work toward that?
3. In the Gospel, we hear about St John asking people to come to repentance. How fitting that this is the precursor of Christ. Clear our minds and souls of all those impediments to loving God fully. Are you planning to ask for forgiveness in this time of preparation? How can we be like St John in preparing others for Christ?

Closing Prayer

God, our heavenly Father, hear our prayers as we ask you for the mercy that you are. We don't deserve what you give us and even though there are hard times and we wonder if you even really care, we know, in some small, delicate part of our souls that you are always here. You live in us even when we outwardly show our disdain for all the good you have given us. Please remind us of this spark inside us. Kindle that spark into a tiny flame to light our inner souls to a peace that will then help us be a light to others. We don't think we're worthy of carrying your message into all the world, and we fall upon your mercy to prepare us for that mission. Let us hear you, see you and love you in all your creation during this time of joyful anticipation of the coming of your Son, Jesus for our salvation. And we ask all of this through Jesus's name, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.