

3rd Sunday of Advent



Today's readings shift the responsibility for establishing justice from the realm of God to the efforts of every human. It was for each person to care for the needs of others.

In the first reading, during the reign of King Josiah (640-625 BC), the ancient text of the Deuteronomic code of law was discovered in the cleaning of the temple. In reflecting on it Josiah found that the people had deviated from the original law. He started a reform to bring about conformance to the code. Only through faithfulness could the people be assured of Yahweh's blessing. With the "day of the Lord" the people would be saved from oppression, and the Davidic dynasty would be established forever.

In the second reading, this jubilation is extended to the early Christian community. Be assured of God's peace and care. But there was one catch that was easily overlooked, "let your gentleness be known to everyone." While God did indeed provide, the community had the responsibility to care for one another.

In the Gospel, that responsibility is more clearly spelled out in response to the question, "what then should we do?" The evangelist Luke's concern for the poor and disadvantaged are addressed. No longer were fasting and sacrifice a sufficient response to the covenant. He tells us that abundance is not wrong, but we must share with those that have none. He then addresses abuses by certain members of society. Tax collectors vied for certain territories, and they went to the highest bidder. John cautions them to honesty: "collect no more than the amount prescribed."