

December 16, 2007  
Sunday of the Third Week of Advent

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

Is 35:1-6a, 10

Ps 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10

Jas 5:7-10

Mt 11:2-11

*Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you?  
"Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?"*

"Here comes your God...he comes to save you." This week we begin to enter a bit into the realization that Christmas is approaching soon. While it is a time to rejoice, I often find myself lamenting the fact that there are so few days left to prepare. But the preparation I usually mean is time to complete my gift shopping, put up a tree, bake a few cookies, and prepare the traditional meal we share as a family each Christmas season. "Here comes your God...he comes to save you." Those words put a different spin on my holiday preparations. They call me to pay attention to life at a deeper level. To be saved, to me implies that I am doing something that is life threatening to me, there is some thing that is endangering my life. This implies to me that there is some truth about life or at least the way I think about and live life that is beyond me. This also implies that someone cares enough about me to want to save me from the harm I may be facing or inviting into my life through my distorted beliefs and/or self-serving behavior. This is what I desire for this week, to ponder the meaning of such a love. This love does call me to change my ways. Jesus' life does reveal a truth that requires a change of heart and a change in behavior. But, for now, for this week, as I wait for the coming of Jesus, I simply want to bask in the love of God as I prepare for the great celebration of Christmas Day. The gifts will get bought and wrapped somehow—they always do. There may or may not be cards sent or cookies baked, but that will not be the end of the world. The meal will be cooked, shared and enjoyed by all. The tree will get decorated. Of all this I am sure. Externally, I will be prepared for the holiday season, but will I be prepared internally for the difference Jesus' birth is meant to make in my in my heart and in my life? What difference will this Advent and Christmas season make in the way I see the world, understand my part in God's plan, and live every ordinary day? What difference will it make that God loves me enough to make sure I know, through the life of Jesus, what is truly important in my life and in the world at large.

*"God is the foundation of hope: not any god, but the God who has a human face and who has loved us to the end, each one of us and humanity in its entirety."*

*In Hope We are Saved* The New Encyclical by Pope Benedict XVI