

December 4, 2017 Jane Kegan

Read: Isaiah 11:1-5

¹A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ²The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD- ³and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. ⁵Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

This passage in the Old Testament foretells the coming of a Savior and then eloquently describes what characteristics he will possess-a Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, righteous judgment, justice for the poor of the earth, power to defeat the wicked, and faithfulness.

Do you sometimes watch the news about the turmoil in the world and wonder how this can be laid to rest? What has to happen to vanquish the wicked and sow love, mercy, and forgiveness in its place? The answer has already been given to us---it is Jesus! Yet, we still have to do our part as his disciples to show others those same qualities. Challenge yourself in this advent season to model only love, mercy and forgiveness. The blessings you give and receive will be the best gift of this season.

Thought for the Day: Today, I will model, love, mercy, and forgiveness to bring peace to the world.

Prayer: Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

December 19, 2017 Matthew 2:19-23. Jane Kegan

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the LORD appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." ²¹So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

As a quilter, this verse speaks to me. One of the first things I learned was to wash, dry, and iron all new fabrics before cutting them and **sewing** the pieces together for a quilt top. To skip this step is to risk colors running in your new quilt, or puckering in your finished quilt because of shrinkage.

Jesus was questioned about why his disciples weren't fasting as the disciples of John and the Pharisees were. He replied, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?" Jesus is the bridegroom. He was bringing a new covenant to light, the "New covenant" couldn't be sewn into the old ways of slavery to the Laws without failure. As we celebrate and meditate on the words of Jesus this Advent season. Ask yourself, "How will I share with others the life-giving grace of believing in and following Jesus? Are my words and deeds a testament to my love of Jesus and my love for others?"

Thought for the Day: (**John** 13:34) A new commandment I give you. Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, all men will know you are my disciples.

Prayer:

Dear God, Help me to remember your commandment to love others this Advent season. Thank you for your gift of a Savior for my sins. Make me ever mindful of the New Covenant that frees me from slavery to the Laws and replaces them with God's grace. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.