

## **Third Week Before Advent**

(There are two choices of propers for each office this week) A Homily is provided for Morning Prayer A, and one for Evening Prayer A. Others are to be written.

In 2008 this is Trinity 25, use the collect for Epiphany 5

In 2009 this is Trinity 22, use that collect

In 2010 this is Trinity 23, use that collect

In 2011 this is Trinity 20, use that collect

In 2012 this is Trinity 23, use that collect

In 2013 this is Trinity 24, use that collect

### **Morning Prayer A**

First Lesson: Ruth 1:1-17

Second Lesson: Col 3:5-11

### **Homily**

In the Old Testament lesson we heard the beginning of the story of a woman named Ruth.

This Ruth was

the great-grandmother of King David,

and thus was an ancestor of the Lord Jesus.

Her story is an interesting one,

appearing to be a break with the expected pattern,

and yet, right in accord with the history of God and His chosen people.

The story sets the scene for the origin of Israel's greatest king,

David, the shepherd boy, the poet, the warrior, from whose loins one day came the Messiah.

But, for those used to thinking of Israel as a nation entirely separate from its neighbors, a chosen people, selected by God,

and kept pure and distinct,

for those, the story takes a surprising turn.

Instead of a narrative of the Land and the People, we hear the theme of a stranger in a strange land.

It starts with a good Hebrew couple, who find themselves led by circumstances

to settle in a foreign land,

to be strangers in a strange land..

For all the talk of a chosen people

and a promised land,

whether the people wanted to admit it or not,

such a situation was not the least bit unusual, nor is it today.

From the time of Abraham,

it has always been so

that a large proportion of that people

have lived elsewhere than on that land,

driven out by economics,

or by military oppression,  
 sometimes carried away into exile,  
 sometimes fleeing for their lives;  
 and, even when they were in the land,  
 they were often under foreign rule.  
 Even today,  
 when there is once again a Jewish nation,  
 Jews are to be found all through the world.

This couple had two sons,  
 and the husband died.  
 leaving Naomi a widow.  
 The boys married,  
 and who were the wives they chose?  
 They were Moabites, local girls, gentiles,  
 Modern Jews have a word for that.  
 A gentile woman who marries a Jew  
 is called a "shikseh",  
 and that's not a nice label,  
 it's generally spoken with scorn.  
 As one reads the Old Testament Scriptures,  
 one finds condemnation often thundered out  
 for Hebrew men who married local women.  
 Now both sons died  
 and Naomi determined to return to her people,  
 leaving her daughters-in-law to marry again  
 in their own country.  
 But the shikseh, Ruth, committed herself

to Naomi and her people,  
 went with her to Israel,  
 herself became a stranger in a strange land,  
 married a Hebrew,  
 and became the mother of kings  
 and of the Messiah Himself.

St. Matthew, who seems  
 to have addressed his Gospel to Jewish Christians,  
 does the unlikely thing of including Ruth's name  
 in Jesus' genealogy.  
 Why is this strange?  
 Down to this day, one is a Jew by birth,  
 if one has a Jewish mother.  
 The son of a Jewish father and a gentile mother  
 has to undergo the rites of conversion.  
 Why would St. Matthew stress such a thing?

We heard the answer from St. Paul:

*"... there is neither Greek nor Jew,  
 circumcision nor uncircumcision,  
 Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free:  
 but Christ is all, and in all."*

Yes, God called a people.  
 Yes, He crafted a history into which  
 His only-begotten Son could be born.  
 Yes, He revealed Himself over time

in his relationship with that people,  
but He made sure that His Son took flesh,  
as the offspring of every nation.

His Word has always been for the whole world.  
And thus it is that we are among God's people.  
Thus it is that we can be the new Israel.  
Not many of us can prove Jewish ancestry,  
but we can claim Jesus as our brother in the flesh.

It is for all men, of all nations and all races,  
that He shed His Blood on the Cross.  
It is for all humanity that He rose again,  
leading us to new life in Him.  
It is to every person who accepts His call  
that he says, "Take eat ... Drink ye all of it ..."  
It is to all the world that He sends us  
to speak His Good news.

Let us pray.

O God, who hast made of one blood all nations of  
men for to dwell on the face of the whole earth, and  
didst send thy blessed Son to preach peace to them  
that are far off and to them that are nigh; Grant that  
all men everywhere may seek after thee and find  
thee. Bring the nations into thy fold, pour out thy  
Spirit upon all flesh, and hasten thy kingdom;

through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

see also the sermon by Canon Hollister  
under this date  
in the Sermons by Other Authors

**Third Week Before Advent**

**Morning Prayer B**

First Lesson: Hab 1:12-2:4, 2:9-14

Second Lesson: Luke 12:35-48

**Homily to be written**

**Third Week Before Advent**

## **Evening Prayer A**

First Lesson: Joel 3:9-17

Second Lesson: Matt 13:36-52

## **Homily**

We are at war.

This is not about the clash of huge armies,  
nor the striving of nation against nation.

There is no visible territory under attack,  
nor a definable front where enemies meet.

But this is war,  
and it is only right that the prophet describes it  
in such vivid and warlike images.

Joel stands up boldly to speak for the Lord,  
to speak in a way we would seldom think wise.

He hurls out a challenge  
to the enemies of God and His people,  
and calls them to take up their arms,  
to come to the attack,  
to do their very worst.

Notice that he says very little  
about what God's people should do,  
but rather calls the heathen to come  
and to challenge God Himself  
-- to do all they can to oppose the Almighty  
-- and to be judged and condemned by Him.

God has not given His people the job  
of conquering the enemy,  
but of turning to Him and trusting Him.  
He is not, in this passage,  
raising up a mighty army of His servants,  
but rather calling up a mighty army to oppose Him,  
to show the fullness of their wrath and evil,  
and ultimately to be judged and condemned

Why should this be?

Why should the people of God be put in peril?

Why is He not setting them forth to defeat evil?  
Wouldn't it be better simply to uproot  
all the forces of darkness and to destroy them,  
so that God's people could live in peace?

That's what the disciples thought.

They expected Messiah to lead a great army,  
to drive the Romans and other heathen away,  
and to set up a righteous kingdom  
in the Promised Land.

Instead Jesus told them a little story.

It was about wheat and weeds growing up together.  
They would have wanted to rush into the field,  
and pull up every last weed.

Jesus said, "No. Let them grow together.

Wait for the harvest to separate them.”

This world is like that.

This war is like that.

We are indeed under attack

The evil is not gathered together somewhere else:

It is not in some far country where armies clash;

it is in our midst, growing up with us,

constantly seeking to enlist us in its cause.

And how does the evil defeat the good?

By choking the goodness out of it.

By making the good become evil,

just like itself.

If we begin to bite and devour,

if all our energies are devoted to destroying evil,

we too easily become biters, devourers, haters,

and the evil has conquered us and made us its own.

But there is treasure buried in the field

There is a pearl of great price.

We’ve found the treasure,

and our mission is to let it be known.

Yes, the world is full of evil,

and we could become very angered at the sight of it

But God looks on the same world,

and God loved this world so much, sin and all,

that He gave his only-begotten Son,

so that all who believe in Him might not perish,

but have everlasting life.

Evil will be destroyed at the end,

but not one of those doing evil

has to be destroyed.

The Cross brought forgiveness

and that forgiveness is for anyone who will accept it

We have a treasure to share,

and our job is to share it.

Let us pray.

Lord, make me an instrument of thy  
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

O Divine Master,

grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled . . . as to console

To be understood . . . as to understand,

To be loved . . . as to love  
For it is in giving . . . that we receive,  
It is in pardoning, that we are pardoned,  
It is in dying . . . that we are born to  
eternal life  
Amen.

**Third Week Before Advent**

**Evening Prayer B**

First Lesson: Amos 5:14-24

Second Lesson: Gal 6:1-10

**Homily to be written**