

Homily 2nd Sunday in Advent 2025

Let's NOT MISS THE POINT of The Incarnation. Christ is coming to bring 'glad tidings of great JOY!'

The story goes that three friends, an Englishman, an Irishman and a Scot decided to have a Christmas meal. It was agreed that each would bring something from his own native country. The Englishman spoke up first and volunteered to bring Norfolk turkey, English country style bloomers of bread and some West Country cider. The Irishman spoke up next and offered to bring some succulent Irish beef, ham and potatoes. After some thought the Scotsman somewhat cannily piped up, 'Oh I'll bring the wife and the weans (children).' The Scotsman somewhat sadly MISSED THE POINT of Christmas fellowship, sharing and communion,

Isaiah today, describes the time of the future Messiah as a time of peace between nations, a time of justice and equality for all peoples. In the Messianic times the poor will be free from exploitation and injustice. The Messiah, filled with The Holy Spirit, will rule with wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, with knowledge and the fear of the LORD. He will rule with righteousness and judge with the innocence of a child. However, The Chosen People MISSED THE POINT and distorted the messianic prophecies in their desire for a powerful, warrior king who would lead them to victory over 'the nations' and build up an earthly Kingdom.

In The Letter to The Romans, St Paul reminds us that peace, justice and harmony amongst peoples will only be achieved if individuals, you and me, live in peace, justice and harmony with our neighbours, 'May God grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.' We mustn't MISS THE POINT and think justice, peace, and a better world are the sole responsibility of those in high positions.

The words of John the Baptist in today's Gospel are also very much directed at you and me as well as the great leaders of the earth. Religious leaders must also be careful to heed John's words and not MISS THE POINT blindly following laws, implementing rules sweepingly and without qualification, with little concern for the plight of the poor, the heavily burdened, the outcast and the stressed, anxious or worried, 'When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."' The Church today must NOT MISS THE POINT. We must keep in mind that the core message and Mission of Christ is one of compassion, mercy, understanding, forgiveness and JOY especially to those most in need. We disciples are called to be bearers of Good News to the poor, liberators of captives, healers of the blind and defenders of those carrying heavy burdens.

Like The Scotsman we can all MISS THE POINT as we prepare Christmas. We can all get caught up in the rampant consumerism of the festive season, the office parties, the drinks, the 'Secret Santas', the unbridled revelry. We can all forget that The Divine Messiah comes to bring GLAD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY to the poor, the war torn, outcasts and sinners, bringing love, justice and peace to our often 'messy' world.

How often too during our lives do we, whilst already carrying great weights, anxieties and worries about health, relationships, finance, and family, must endure harsh judgements which add more heavy burdens to our already overlaid shoulders? Let's not MISS THE POINT of the Christmas message. Let us embrace the angels' song of 'GREAT JOY' and carry that JOY and HOPE, especially to those struggling with the weight of the often-unrelenting stresses and anxieties of daily life. Let's remember Christ's liberating words this Advent:

'Come to me all you who are laden and overburdened and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light'.

Come O divine Messiah!
The world in silence waits the day
When hope shall sing its triumph
And sadness flee away

O Christ, whom nations sigh for
Whom priest and prophet long foretold
Come break the captive fetters
Redeem the long-lost fold

Dear Saviour, haste
Come, come to earth
Dispel the night and show your face
And bid us hail the dawn of grace