

## ***Peace is ...Emmanuel, "God with us"***

*Isaiah 11: 9 "...for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD..."*

*Romans 15: 5 "May the God of endurance and encouragement [help] you  
to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus..."*

*Matthew 3: 8 "Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance."*

Reflection:

### ***Advent is a time of hope!***

When everything appears desolate in the dead of winter, we look forward to a landscape full of life and color in the spring. "Hope assures us that, with God's grace, we will see our way through... For believers, hope is not a matter of optimism, but a source for strength and action in demanding times."<sup>1</sup> We foster hope in each other when we look forward to Christ's coming to us in the sacraments, as well as at Christmas, and at His second coming, which we await. Hope gives us the ability to be at peace, no matter the circumstances, because Christ is truly with us, as He promised, helping us to look forward to a better life ahead.

### ***Our call***

We have been baptized with fire and the Holy Spirit. We need to fan that fire within us, to allow the Holy Spirit to work through us, so that we will bear good fruit. We have an ongoing call to conversion, to move deeper into the mystery of our faith. As our faith comes alive, we radiate the joy and truth of the gospel to a world that is in desperate need of God's light and truth. God's Word, Jesus, has the power to change and transform our lives so that we all may be lights pointing others to Christ.

St. Paul invites us to think in harmony with one another. In today's Isaiah reading we hear, "the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb..." What wonderful imagery of God's version of harmony! *How do we accomplish this in our world?* We live in harmony when everyone is looking out for one another's well-being. *Are our hearts attuned to recognize others' needs? Are we ready to help others generously?*

To the extent that we go out of our way for others, we are preparing the way of the Lord. Let's pray for the endurance to go on, to keep on giving. Let's encourage one another, as it is easy to sit back and let others do the work. When we work together, we can accomplish so much! Let's be assured that one act of kindness, one welcoming word or smile, can cause a chain of light, which emanates from Christ through us. Let's be awake and realize that it is up to each of us to bring the kingdom of God to the world around us. The little things we do matter!

### ***Action:***

- *Volunteer to help with the Mobile Food Pantry the morning of December 18<sup>th</sup>. [Details in bulletin.]*
  - *Consider asking your invited guests to bring a donation for the W/R Food Pantry when you gather for the holidays.*
  - *Be generous in donating to the Adopt-A-Baby program sponsored by our children in their respective faith formation programs.*
  - *Pay attention to the needs of others. Choose a way in which you will address those needs.*
  - *Assist with the community dinner offered by the Whiting United Methodist Church once a month (December 18<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 p.m.).*
- ..... ***Wish everyone a "Merry Christmas!"*** .....

Presented by the Whiting/Robertsdale Peace and Social Justice Commission, December 5, 2010.  
<http://www.sjbcatholicparish.org/peace-justice.php>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, USCCB, Washington, D.C., 2006, p.333.