

Come! December 15, 2021

This is the key word of Advent liturgy. **Come!** Today's entrance antiphon repeats the ancient promise: "The Lord is coming and will not delay". In the alleluia verse we hear it again: "The Lord God comes with power."

With so much need in our world, in our hearts, we are quite ready to say, "Come!"

This is not the "come" of a mother urging on a child lingering in front of the toy shop window. This is the urgent "come" of one in great need and trusting the promise that there is help on the way. We can imagine this sort of cry for help coming from the midst of the recent tragic tornado scene.

In today's Gospel, the call for a reassurance of hope comes from John the Baptist. By now, he is in prison, but has access to his disciples. He sends them urgently to question Jesus. They introduce themselves as sent by John and pose their question. It is urgent that they know. "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?"

I should know not to expect a simple, straight answer. Jesus offers what seems like a code reply. This is how they will know if he is the expected one; this is the message they are to relay to John.

- The blind regain sight
- The lame will walk
- lepers are cleansed
- the deaf hear
- the dead are raised
- the poor have the good news proclaimed to them.

For John, these provided proof that Jesus—who did all these things—was the awaited one. Surely, he is still awaited, consciously or not.

In our day, he will bring comfort and help to those who mourn with the parents and classmates in Oxford; he will strengthen those who give shelter to families made homeless by Kentucky's tornadoes; he will console those whose relatives will spend the holidays in prison, and those whose children are critically ill.

We know the signs that indicate his presence. We don't always expect miracles of regained sight or the cure of critical illness. But sometimes the greatest need is within. Consider what it is in these days...or past days, that gives you the peace of knowing that, even as we wait, he has come and is here.