

## *Reflection on the Second Reading for the Second Sunday of Advent*

December 4, 2011



- a) Since everything is to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be, conducting yourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God ...
- b) ... but according to his promise, we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.
- c) Therefore, beloved, since you await these things, be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace.

There are those folks who are accusing me of developing a “cranky theology.” I can’t imagine why! But here is where I am right now.

I get caught up in total despair sometimes because of the mess this world is in, and from which mess it cannot seem to extricate itself. This year will be my 71st time getting ready for Advent. My first time, I presume, was in first grade. And as far as I can see, the lion and the lamb are not even close to lying down next to each other. I could list all the terrible things I know are happening, but you already know that.

So I pondered all this darkness and have begun to comfort myself with the thought that this is all an evolutionary process ... not just in our evolving from apes, etc., but in terms of moral evolving. I don’t worry too much anymore about the official stance of the Church on evolution. To be honest, I’m not even sure where the Church is on this. But it has been wrong so many times already (Galileo, Chardin, etc.) that I don’t get excited about that anymore. But what I do see is more and more people really trying, on many levels—mostly small levels—trying to make a real difference in this world. Last night, on the news [November 14], NBC featured a little girl, about 12, who is working on behalf of people who are not getting enough food. When I was 12, I am not sure I realized there were starving people all over the world!

I think of movie stars, e.g. George Clooney, who works to help the people of Darfur, or Mariska Hargitay (Law and Order SVU), who started a foundation for battered and abused women because of her work on that TV show, or Brad Pitt, who works for the protection of wild animals. When I was a kid, movie stars didn’t do things like that, for the most part.

When you read *Readers’ Digest*, they almost always have an article about someone who is working to help someone else. And the evening news is beginning to focus on such people as well. And these are just a bare few of the stories that could be told.

So here is what I think. I think that as a people, we are evolving morally, as well as physically, mentally, etc. So, more and more, people are beginning to take responsibility for the suffering around them. (For the most part, these people do not include the big time financiers, or Congress, for crying out loud! Just the common people.)

So, looking at the three items above, “A” asks what sort of person you and I ought to be, as we wait for this coming of the day of God. This is a no-brainer. We should be the kind of people that are striving, in our own small way, to make the world a better place now! Making sandwiches for the poor—as the Sisters are doing even as I write this—is a small thing, but it is a positive thing. Striving to be conscious of conservation ... working for peace by badgering the crazies in Congress to do more for peace ... remembering that we are, indeed, our sisters’ and brothers’ keepers ... these are good things that move the moral evolutionary process along. I wish we could do much more, but this is a “one-step-at-a-time” thing, and that’s that!

And that’s where “B” comes in. We do, indeed, await new heavens and a new earth. Now the pace of all this makes me break out in a rash sometimes, but I, and probably you, need to hang on by our fingernails, and just keep plugging along.

As for “C” ... forget it! There is no way that you and I will ever be found without spot or blemish, and that’s the end of that. God made us as we are. If God had wanted better people, then God should have created better people, for crying out loud. We do the best we can with the gifts God gave us, and that is all we can do. The key is to keep on keeping on, never giving up, never ceasing to strive to make this crazy world just a little bit better.

And that is my wish for you for Advent ... and for myself as well ... that we continue to work to make the world a better place as we prepare for the final coming of Jesus, whether it is the little one when we ourselves die and are taken up by Him, or the biggie—whatever the heck that is all about!

Peace!

Sr. Joan Albaugh, CDP