



advent



lectionary  
reading

## Cycle A

### 2nd Sunday of Advent

Lectionary # 4

#### Reading I: Isaiah 11: 1-10

The prophet Isaiah continues the theme of building a kingdom where peace will permeate all of life. Last week the image was the transformation of weapons of war into farming tools. Today the theme is life lived in **harmony**. Isaiah conjures up images of opposites living in tranquility with one another... *Then the wolf will be the guest of the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and young lion shall browse together....There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain.* These are very vivid images that speak to people looking for **harmony** in what is often a world of discord.

#### Reading 2: Romans 15: 4-9

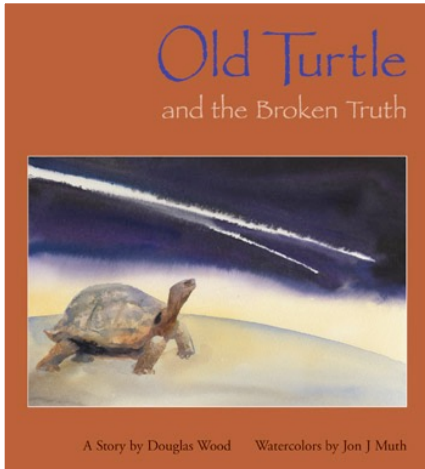
Saint Paul in this letter to the Church at Rome speaks of the great importance for a church, a community, to think and act in **harmony** with one another. He indicates clearly that remaining focused on the person of Jesus Christ which will bring about harmony. In the midst of differences of opinions there is still the opportunity for harmony if each strives to see Christ in the other. This will be an ongoing theme for Saint Paul's letters to various communities.

#### Gospel: Matthew 3: 1-12

John the Baptist preaches the great need for repentance, in order for people to make the changes needed for **harmony** to exist in the community. John does not mince words with the religious leaders of the day and speaks to them about getting their houses in order because one mightier than he is about to appear on the scene.



children's  
story



### Old Turtle and the Broken Truth

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character  
education  
activity

**Harmony comes from the greek word "harmonia" which means to be in agreement. This agreement is the art of living in concord with one another and caring for one another.**

## Old Turtle and the Broken Truth

In this profoundly moving fable, the earth and all of its creatures are suffering. The people will not share their Truth, which gives them happiness and power, with those who are different than them. Then one brave Little Girl seeks the wisdom of the ancient Old Turtle, who sees that the people's Truth is not the whole truth but broken. Old Turtle shows the girl the missing part of the Truth and the Little Girl returns with it to her people. Then the pieces are brought together, and the broken Truth is made whole at last: YOU ARE LOVED....AND SO ARE THEY. Then the people and the earth are healed. The truth is that we are all in this world together and we are connected to one another. As human beings we can celebrate that connectedness or we can choose to fight anything that is different than us. Discord or **harmony** are the choices. A piece of choral music often has voice parts and those parts add a richness to the piece of music. The melody sung alone may sound fine, but when the harmony is added there is a much richer sound. This is also true of how we live in the world. Differences coming together create a beauty that approaches the wonderment of God. Isaiah looks to a **harmonious** gathering of God's creation in his writings. Saint Paul speaks to the great thing that may occur if the community members think and act in **harmony**. John the Baptist speaks of the ruin that will come if we do not live in **harmony** with God's will.

## Activity

Step One: Provide an image of the art piece "The Peaceable Kingdom" by Edward Hicks for the students to view. This is easily done by using the World Wide Web.

Step Two: Ask the students to look closely to the picture and see what renderings they observe that are included in the reading from Isaiah 11: 1-10. Ask them to list them and see how many they can identify.

Step Three: Ask the students "If such a picture were to be drawn today what groups would be included alongside one another?"

**Discipline and perseverance are things that we will always have to work at. Think of it as always trying to be the best in whatever you do!**



**case study**

**Look.  
Feel.  
Know.  
Act.**

## What could you do today?

The peace pole is one that the students would be able to accomplish with parental assistance. There are peace poles with the word peace inscribed on the four sides (or more) of a pole in many different languages. The languages of the school or parish would definitely be included, however peace in different languages would be used as well. The dimensions and size of the pole would be determined by where the pole would be erected. An ideal location may be wherever the people gather before entering the school or church building. The combined work of the students and parents could be erected and dedicated on a special day of the parish or school. A good reference for more information is [www.peacepoleproject.org](http://www.peacepoleproject.org).

## Look Feel Know Act

A traditional greeting of our Jewish brothers and sisters is “shalom”, which means peace. This tradition involves wishing the person an inner peace and not simply an external reality of no conflict. Each of us wants to be at peace and have an inner **harmony**. Jesus spoke of this many times and it has become so much a part of us as Christians that the wish for **harmony** has become an essential part of our liturgical prayer. One of the most significant times of wishing another peace is at the Sign of Peace prior to the reception of Holy Communion. The purpose of that Sign of Peace is not simply to say a nice hello to others around us, but to recall that we still need to strive to be at peace within our lives. Only then can we approach the Body of Christ in the Eucharist recognizing that the Body of Christ still exists in a world that is not at peace. In receiving the Body of Christ, we hope to be a source of peace in the world. When we leave the mass we are called to carry the Body of Christ with us so that we may see the Body of Christ around us in others.

In *Old Turtle and Broken Truth* we see great parallels with the scripture readings chosen for this Second Sunday of Advent and Old Turtle as they both bespeak of a brokenness. In the Old Testament lesson from Isaiah, the prophet dreams of a brokenness being made whole and uses the image of mortal enemies becoming friends. Likewise, Saint Paul exhorts the community at Rome to get along in the midst of their differences by focusing on Christ. John the Baptist certainly calls the religious leaders to accountability because they have not done justice to those they are called to lead. They have in fact been the cause of division rather than **harmony**.



**closing  
tool**

**Pray that your presence in the world will be a unifying factor among the people around you and that your life would be in harmony with God's will. Amen.**



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