



Father Danny Murphy is a retired Pastor from Brooklyn NY. A gifted man with a God given talent to inspire and God's gift to us at Holy Cross Church in Vero Beach Florida. This is just one of his inspirational homilies.

Fr. Danny Murphy – ADVENT 2- 2016

Well this evening we are going to reflect on the poetry of Isaiah from our first reading. But before we do, we should at least give a nod to John the Baptist; the powerful preacher that we meet in today's Gospel. John the Baptist preached repentance, now some other day maybe I will try to explain that preaching repentance is NOT the same as preaching Fire and Brimstone. Now you are all too young to remember the preaching of Fire and Brimstone. That's when priests got into the pulpit and they said: "Everyone is going to Hell!" Well, a classic story, which you must have heard, about Fire and Brimstone preaching, occurred one Sunday morning when the priest is in the pulpit, thundering: "Everyone in this parish is going to Hell!" And there was a little boy in the front pew smiling! So the priest thundered even louder: "Everyone in this parish is going to Hell!" And the little boy kept smiling, so

the priest looked right at him and he said: "Why are you smiling? Didn't you hear me when I said that everyone in this parish is going to hell!!!?" The boy replied, "Yeah, I heard you...but I'm not from this parish!" Well thank God that if nothing else, the days of preaching Fire and Brimstone are over! Now, the POETRY of the Prophet Isaiah! It started last Sunday when we heard "They will turn their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. One nation will not raise a sword against another, nor shall they train for war again." Today, Isaiah continues: "Then the wolf will be a guest of the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid, the calf and the young lion will graze together with a little child to lead them. The cow and the bear will be neighbors, their young shall rest together. The lion shall eat hay like the ox, the baby will play by the cobra's den and the child shall lay its hand in the adder's lair, there will be no harm nor ruin on all my holy mountain." The poetry of Isaiah. Now what Isaiah did was to substitute animals for humans and he depicted a world wherein enemies become friends, where fighting and killing give way to tranquility and peace; a world in which children and all of us will be safe. Wouldn't you want to live in a world like that? Of course you would! We all would. Some of us may remember and many of us might have heard the "I Have a Dream" speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Among his dreams, Dr. King proclaimed: "I have a dream that one day the children of slaves and the children of slave owners will one day sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day, in this great country of ours, children will be judged not on the color of their skin, but on the content of their character. I have a dream that one day we'll

be free at last, free at last, thank God almighty we'll be free at last, I have a dream." That speech took eight minutes. Yet, I think, that speech helped change our country. That speech not only engendered new life into the civil rights movement but also, I think, helped many Americans embrace, rather than just tolerate the Civil Rights movement. America has never been the same since that speech. Why? How could one eight minute speech, no matter how persuasive it was, no matter how powerfully it was presented – how could one eight minute speech change everything? I think Dr. King's dreams were our dreams. He merely articulated what we wanted and I think the same is true with the poetry of the Prophet Isaiah. I think we want this! It seems to me that we are becoming weary of war. It seems to me that we are becoming disgusted by man's inhumanity to man. It seems to me that more of us are becoming more aware of living a life of lust, greed, cruelty, prejudice, selfishness is leading an empty life – at least I hope all of that is true. And it seems to me that we Americans realize that there has to be a better way to live and there is! (Sings) "We shall walk all together, we shall walk hand in hand, we shall walk altogether, we shall walk hand, and together we'll spread the news that God is in our land..." "If we only have love we can melt all the guns and then give a new world to our daughters and sons..." "Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now..." The poetry of Isaiah doesn't have to be mystical or unattainable if we all do our part. "They will turn their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. One nation will not raise a sword against another, nor shall they train for war again." Today, Isaiah continues: "Then the wolf will be a guest of the

lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid, the calf and the young lion will graze together with a little child to lead them. The cow and the bear will be neighbors, their young shall rest together. The lion shall eat hay like the ox, the baby will play by the cobra's den and the child shall lay its hand in the adder's lair, there will be no harm nor ruin on all my holy mountain." Let it be, dear Lord, please let it be!