

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE.

Leader: In the darkness a light was kindled, in the wilderness a voice cried out. The announcement of the Gospel: The Lord is coming! Prepare the way of the Lord, for he is coming! Adorn your soul as a bride adorns herself on her wedding day. The messenger is coming! John the Baptist is not the light, but the one who announces the light.

When we light these three candles, each one of us wants to be a torch that illuminates and warms the Venezuelan people in the midst of their suffering and pain. Come, Lord, to save us, wrap us in your light, warm us in your love!

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD. First reading: So 3,14-18a; Psalm: Is 12; Second reading: Flp 4,4-8; Gospel: Lc 3,10-18

A reading from the first Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians 5:23

"May the God of peace himself make you perfectly holy. and may you entirely, spirit, soul, and body, be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The word of the Lord.

Reflection. Preacher: Sor Celida Amariscua, OP. (Congregation Santo Domingo)

Topic: Human Rights

Bible readings:

Brothers and sisters, today we have the opportunity to unite our hearts around the table of the Word as we learned from NP Domingo. The Word, as a torch that illuminates the life of every human being and of peoples in their contexts and realities, today disposes us to keep our eyes wide open to the reality that surrounds us and strengthens the hope that inhabits our hearts.

We move forward in this DOMINICAN MONTH FOR PEACE, and on this third Sunday of Advent the Word announces that life is full of hope, joy, joy (So. 3.14...) "Rejoice and rejoice with all your heart, Jerusalem... Do not fear, the Lord rejoices and is pleased in you..." just like the psalmist, he invites us to shout for joy at the greatness of the Lord in the midst of his people.

But, how to jump for joy, when life cries out in the day to day of our wounded, violated, suffering, displaced peoples, their basic rights mocked? (Health, food, freedom, education, housing, others...) What are we to do? Where to go? How to act? When is the time?

This Dominican month for peace 2021, the gaze and reflection is oriented to Venezuela and its reality that has been in a complex crisis for more than two decades, which will not be resolved with a month of reflection, but will allow all the brothers and sisters of the Order of Preachers to get closer to this reality, to support, support and accompany from our fraternity, the task of preaching of the Dominican Family, present in this land of grace, such as Venezuela.

Human Rights in and from Venezuela, a topic of great scope and increasingly common, which runs the risk of getting into the routine of listening to them so many times that talking about this topic is the task of a few, when in reality it is the task of all, to a little or a great extent. It is there where the Word questions us, moves the ground, shakes us internally, to uninstall us.

Now, opening our hearts to the reality of the sufferings of our peoples is also to recognize that along with these questions, questions, uncertainties, there are visible and silent numbers of brothers and sisters who with their daily dedication in simplicity, in the key of service, protect, sustain, seek to promote the basic rights of numerous groups, sectors, peoples and communities, through educational works, health centers, reception centers.

Our friars and sisters take care of and develop sustainable projects promoting life and human rights in the main cities (Caracas, Mérida, Maracaibo, Barquisimeto, Barinas), but also in little-known towns (San José de Barlovento, Adícora, Tanaguarena, Punta de Mata, etc.). And it is very valuable to say that the lay fraternities of the order and of the congregations, as well as the youth of the MJD, from their contexts, on a day-to-day basis contribute, add and announce Jesus with their presence, with their work, with their testimony, always adding to the protection of the basic rights of Venezuelans.

Our nuns, who from the different monasteries of the whole world, in these days of special asceticism in the season of Advent, dedicate with perseverance and joy time to prayer, to support and accompany the task of preaching of the entire Dominican family in the concrete reality in Venezuela and in the whole world.

In this rejoicing, we do not stop questioning ourselves, who to turn to, where to go, how to do in certain and certain cases and the Word will always indicate the route. Brothers and sisters, Paul reminds us: *"Let us go with confidence ... on every occasion, in prayer and supplication, with thanks giving"* Filip. 4, 4–7

Magical answers will not come from our personal and community prayer, but a strengthened heart and a persevering commitment from a community that is very clear that where it was sent, it has been sent in the name of the Order, to contribute, sow, enlighten and bring Good News.

And that from the encounter with the Word, read, prayed, shared in community, life will always move us to the concrete faces of our present history.

Today we turn our gaze to Venezuela, and we pray for its complex and critical situation, without forgetting the DR Congo, Ukraine, Colombia, Thailand, Mexico, Haiti, Afghanistan, India and many other places where the OP repeats day by day with the psalmist: "The Lord is my God and saviour, whom I will fear."

CONCRETE ACTION: That at the moment of lighting the 3 candle, our prayer for this day to be of gratitude for those who in a concrete way are in the field of defense of human rights and at the same time of supplication to the Lord, that our hearts remain restless in the continuous search for the Truth that is Jesus himself and salvation.