



## **Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 3:1-12**

### **Reverend Giuseppe Mattei (December 7, 2025)**

God knows the poor need protection, they need to be seen, heard. Yet, they are left out when decisions are made. They certainly are not consulted. Yet, their voice is valuable. Their voice is needed for the wellbeing of the whole community.

But they are easily dismissed. The poor of any age and any country are easily ignored and overlooked. They are not wealthy nor are they connected to powerful people. Hence, why should those in power even bother? They are deemed to have nothing to offer, nothing to contribute. On the contrary, they are labeled as an economic burden and a social annoyance. Yet, they can be a political force to reckon with if only they had a voice or nowadays, we would say, voting access. On their own, they scare no one. “Why listen?” the powerful ask. Why waste time? Why commit resources for them?

But God sees. God pays attention. The cry of the poor is never lost on God. Scripture consistently shows that God bends His ear toward those who suffer, complementing His compassion with justice.<sup>1</sup> The poor are not abandoned; their cry becomes the seed of hope. God’s response is salvation, deliverance, and

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<sup>1</sup> Ps 34:6; 72:12-13; Proverbs 21:13; Isaiah 41:17 and in today’s passage from Isaiah 11:3-5

restoration. God is not absent or indifferent or sleeping or distant. God cares for the abandoned and the oppressed.<sup>2</sup>

The God of peace *will* give peace. Not the forced peace the world gives but the true peace based on divine justice where those who have been overlooked find a place at the table. In fact, God's promise not only comforts but also empowers: the poor are redeemed and lifted up. There is not only consolation but also the courage to hope, to move forward, knowing they are cherished and secure in the embrace of God's unwavering love.

When God acts, justice is employed.<sup>3</sup> Without justice, peace wouldn't be a true and lasting peace. The pursuit of peace necessitates that injustice is not overlooked. When that happens, when justice is not part of the collective experience, peace is shallow and insignificant. People still suffer, perhaps they even submit for a time. But resentment and rebellion will sooner or later bring to surface what has been pushed down through unjust laws and military force.

God responds to injustices. Isaiah poetically describes how God prepares for a necessary course correction: "With righteousness God will judge the needy, with justice God will give decisions for the poor of the earth... Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist." (Isaiah 11:4-5)

Peace cannot be truly achieved and celebrated while past and present injustices go ignored, denied, forgotten, hidden and

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<sup>2</sup> Ps 121:3-4; Isaiah 40:28

<sup>3</sup> Dt 32:4; Is 61:8; Ps 99:4; Micah 6:8

suppressed. How can there be peace while civil and human rights are violated, both locally and globally; divisive and racist rhetoric is frequently spoken at the highest level of government; lies and coverups become the norm; military occupation, destruction, death and the displacement of survivors still happens; human life and peace agreements are disregarded?

Palestinian theologians John and Samuel Munayer reflect:

The Nativity story is one of a family forced to flee massacres and of a child laid in a manger because there was no room in the inn. In our land, where space is denied and belonging is contested, this story is not remote history. Instead, it mirrors our present reality.

Christmas is not a shallow festivity, nor a consumer spectacle, but a hope born in the very midst of instability, insecurity, and suffering.

Christmas is for the oppressed. It is for those who know exile and the bitterness of hunger...The Incarnation, the birth of God among us, is not an idea, not a distant abstraction. It is held in the reality of flesh and blood. It is the embodiment of God as a Palestinian Jew under Roman occupation, sharing the identity of the oppressed and living among them. Jesus is born into poverty, a child of an oppressed people.

The good news of Christmas proclaims that the savior of the world is also the companion of the crucified peoples

of history...God is among the brokenhearted and those yearning for liberation. This is why the Nativity cannot be separated from the Cross. The child born in Bethlehem is already the Christ who will be lifted up at Golgotha.<sup>4</sup>

But the present suffering and helplessness of many is not wasted on God who has a different vision in mind, a vision of peace and not of violence and aggression: “The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat.”<sup>5</sup>

In today’s gospel we see the adult John, nicknamed the Baptizer, fulfilling the prediction that his father Zechariah, in Luke’s gospel, uttered about him at his birth: “You, my child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins. Because of the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to shine on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Lk 1:76-79)

The Lord is a God who keeps promises.<sup>6</sup> God’s Peace is the end product of deep, compassionate listening and commitment to justice. God promised Peace and God will deliver it. If we want Peace, let us love kindness, walk in justice with the Lord.<sup>7</sup> Amen.

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<sup>4</sup> John and Samuel Munayer, [Christmas Is for the Oppressed | Sojourners](#) (December, 2025)

<sup>5</sup> Is 11:6

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 117

<sup>7</sup> Micah 6:8