

## **Advent 2017**

### **Week three**

#### **Monday, December 18**

#### ***Oaks of Righteousness***

##### **Prayers for candle-lighting**

The true light, which enlightens everyone, is coming into the world.

*[Light three candles]*

*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,  
my whole being shall exult in my God.*

The true light, which enlightens everyone, is coming into the world.

##### **Isaiah 61:3**

They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

##### **Interpretation**

The image of Israel as a great oak belonging to God appears several times in Isaiah. As the people are decimated by the larger empires around them, the oak is described as being burnt until almost nothing remains of it. Even its stump is burnt repeatedly, until it seems that it could never grow again. But in chapter 11, we read of the hope the people have for another king like David:

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,  
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.  
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and might,  
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.  
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD (11:1-3).

The green shoot that is beginning to sprout from a burnt-out stump is one of the traditional Advent symbols of hope. Christians see Jesus as the green shoot bringing life and hope to God's people.

As followers of Jesus, we look to him as the one upon whom the spirit of the LORD was pleased to rest. But again, as his followers, we also place our own tentative feet into his footprints, following him as we steadily grow in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and righteousness.

##### **For Reflection**

Much of the Diocese of West Texas is covered with live oaks, some of them having flourished here for centuries. In the recent drought, I was told by an arborist that the live oaks use not only the water that they can derive from the soil via their roots; but through their craggy bark they can actually make use of even a slight rain or mist, soaking up the water of life from the least moisture. They might be a model for us, as we seek to live as "oaks of righteousness."

The live oaks challenge us to find nourishment for our faithfulness in everything that comes our way, however small. As you go through the tasks of this day, pay attention to each thing that helps to nourish you in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and righteousness.