

Homily – Christus Santa Rosa, UIW

December 3, 2019

We gather to joyfully celebrate 150 years of Christus Santa Rosa! We also come together at a time of great crisis. The chaos, polarization, and significant changes in our world have significant impact on all of us and the Church.

Our first reading brings comfort and reassurance about an ideal kingdom in and through which God will set things right again. When Isaiah first spoke these words, the people of Jerusalem and Judah were very afraid of the Assyrian empire and its aggressive policies of domination of peoples. God sends the prophet to describe a future world that resembles a return to the Garden of Eden – calves and young lions playing together, leopards lying in peace with young goats, young cows and bears resting together! God will send a Savior who will rule wisely, who will ensure justice for all -- a ruler who will respect the innate human rights and dignity of everyone, including the poor, the widow, the orphan, the stranger. The Spirit of God will rest upon this Messiah, this Son of David. He will be empowered to establish the kingdom of God despite the forces of evil at work in the world.

The characteristics of that kingdom are justice and peace, mercy and compassion, love of God and neighbor, reconciliation, harmony, unity. Jesus has reminded us that the Kingdom of God – while it is clearly not yet fully present – is already here among us. We see signs of the kingdom in Christus Santa Rosa when doctors and nurses bring healing or alleviation of suffering, treating their patients with dignity. We see signs of the kingdom when nurses' aides and dietary staff and security personnel help people who are in difficult times – respecting their individual needs and rights. Yes, the kingdom of God is among us. And we celebrate that today!

Jesus praises his heavenly Father for revealing the good news of the kingdom of God to all the world. We are all God's daughters and sons, created in God's image and likeness. As missionary disciples of the risen Lord, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live our lives in accord with the gospel, proclaiming God's enduring, unconditional love to all whom we encounter not only by our words but also by our actions.

We are not alone. Our Lady of Guadalupe is with us. The risen Christ is with us. The Holy Spirit gives us wisdom, courage, and strength to build up the kingdom of God here and now!