

**December 10, 2020**  
**Thursday of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Week of Advent**  
**Isaiah 41:13-20**  
**Mt 11:11-15**

Our God is a God of abundance, not scarcity. That characterization comes from the Jesuit Conference in Washington, DC. The Jesuit Conference coordinates the Jesuit mission across all the Jesuit provinces in North America similar to what the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops does for the dioceses of the United States.

In the first reading today Isaiah presents moving images of God's abundance like flowing waters and life-bearing trees. In the gospel today Jesus presents an image of the Kingdom of Heaven in which even the least are greater than the great John the Baptist.

**Why is it, then, that in our humanity we have such a tendency to focus on our scarcity rather than our abundance?**

We hear it all the time. We complain about limitations imposed on us by ailments and injuries and disabilities rather than express thanks for all the activities we're able to do. We bemoan the problems we have with our kids rather than trumpet the joys and blessings they bring into our lives. We dwell upon our shortages of material things rather than be grateful for the material things we're blessed to have.

**So why this focus on scarcity rather than abundance?** I wonder if perhaps it's because we take our abundance for granted while at the same time allowing our pride to lead us to believe that we can solve our scarcity issues on our own?

If we're struggling with acquiring an attitude of gratitude for our abundant blessings; if we're trying to solve our physical and relationship and poverty problems on our own---well perhaps we're suffering from an abundance of pride and a scarcity of discipleship.

Karl Barth, the renowned German theologian of the 20th century who was persecuted for his opposition to Kaiser Wilhelm's waging of WWI and Adolph Hitler's waging of WWII, said this: **"Jesus Christ, such as Scripture bears witness of Him for us, is the One Word of God that we must hear, that we must trust, and that we must obey in life and death."**

During this Advent in particular when abundance seems scarce relative to past years and when current events are calling into focus a variety of scarcities in the world, let us spend some moments thanking our Generous God for all that He has blessed us with, most of all His blessing of Jesus as "God Among Us" that we will soon celebrate. As for the scarcities that consume our spirits with worry, may God help us replace our worry with trust in the Lord. May God help us understand that He, not we, is where we will find solutions to the problems and scarcities we face. In the words of Michael Laskey of the Jesuit Conference: **"Let us pray for the grace to trust the Generous Giver"**.