

Second Sunday of Advent 2022-23 -- A
Isaiah 11.1-10//Romans 15.4-9//Matthew 3.1-12

→ asparagus is one of my favorite vegetables...and every season of Advent reminds me of asparagus....and the reason for this is because the **secret** to a successful crop of asparagus and to a successful Advent season is rooted in exactly the same two qualities **preparation** and **patience**

→ did you know that it is very hard to grow asparagus...I know this because I have tried to grow asparagus a number of times...

→ in order to grow asparagus...the first quality....careful preparation of the ground is required

→ before the asparagus roots can be planted...a trench at least a foot deep has to be dug...the entire length of your row

→ then the soil must be enriched with aged compost and sweetened with limestone

→ then it has to be leveled and the roots generously spaced....and then the trench is filled in

→ and then comes **the patience** because you have to wait...and wait....and wait

→ for the first couple of years (2 to 3 to be exact)....there is no harvesting of any asparagusquite possibly during this time there is not even a sign of life in the asparagus patch

→ ...and even when the first frail plant appears....time must be given to allow as many stems as possible to grow and nourish the shoot

→ eventually, as if it is a false promise, these stems die and fall off each autumn...leaving again only a root---with the hope of a harvest at some time in the future

→usually by the fourth year---but sometimes as long as the seventh year, a tender succulent stem can be broken off and eaten.....and if prepared properly, a home garden can yield a healthy crop of asparagus for years and years to come

→[now in my mind] asparagus and Advent will always be tied together

→because what bonds them together is the preparation and patience needed to make the plants produce fruit and the preparation and patience of Advent needed for the celebration of Christmas

PAUSE

→today's scripture readings echo this theme of being prepared...

→of preparing our world to become a better place with a better life...one that someday we all hope to live and rejoice in

→the prophet Isaiah, in today's first reading announces that

→a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from *its roots a branch will bear fruit...the spirit of God will rest on him....the wolf will be the guest of the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid, the calf and the young lion will browse together and the cow and bear shall be neighbors."*

→all in all, Isaiah describes what is to come...a world of peace and justice and harmony

→from the letter to the Romans...we are told to "*endure and have courage so that we might have hope....*

→[and] Matthew continues this theme....as we are told to *make straight our paths...prepare the way....get ready for the coming of the Lord.*

PAUSE

→all three of our readings ...then.....challenge us prepare our world and lives by straightening out our paths....resolving our conflicts and problems, and caring of those that need our support

→to straighten things out....learn from them.....and move on so that the blossoms of God's love may spring forth.

→then comes **patience**....

→patience.....is at a premium in these day...

→we all wish we had more patience, and not only at this time of year but throughout our lives

→parents wish for patience with their children,

→spouses hope for patience with their spouses

→and all us of yearn for more patience with each other

->just like a healthy asparagus crop relies on the patience of the planter

->all of us desire patience as well....and this time of year....it is a virtue that we all long for

→and so maybe [in this coming Advent week] we might consider as a gift to ourselves and one another some preparation and patience...

→preparation in getting our world ready to be a better place

...and patience in some of the little things of daily life

→dwelling and thinking about the presence of God in us

/.....and reflecting about what this season is truly about...and what it actually means to us

→.....this is certainly a time to prepare...and be patient...

→this season of Advent is a time for us to straighten out the bends and curves of life and realize more fully the many blessings we have been given so that we can be prepared for the coming of the Lord

PAUSE

→preparation and patience.....

→that's what it takes to grow asparagus and that is what it takes to live life and make Advent meaningful...

→and yet perhaps most challenging these days is that more often than not... we tend to have more patience and will take more care of asparagus plants or anything else for that matter than we sometimes do with people.....

→so perhaps now.....in this season of Advent.....is time realize what is truly important about this time of year and every season....

..... to simply...take more seriously our preparation... and...to have more patience.

→because you see Advent and asparagus ...**truly do** have a lot in common