**Advent Reflection: Week 3**

Molly Buccola

The third week of Advent we light the wreath’s pink candle, symbolizing joy. Joy is grounded in ultimate peace, commonly found when investing in deep relationships with the self, others, and God. Advent is a season to nurture these relationships with intent. We create boundaries and develop routines rooted in that which we value so that we can grow towards our full potential.

Sunday’s reading from the Prophet Isaiah says that even the desert “steppe will rejoice and bloom and the hands of the feeble will strengthen.” No matter where we start or how many times we fall, there is always hope to bloom to our full potential. Sometimes we feel like desert steppe; complacent, dried/burned out, alone but the Prophet Isaiah explains that there is always hope for something more, something beyond. This is a perfect reading for the Advent season, where we prepare ourselves for the Prince of Peace and Joy Incarnate. There are points in our lives when we thirst for refreshers to step back and remember why we do what we do and to search for support, guidance, and inspiration. Then, our “feeble” ways can turn to strength.

The next reading from the Book of James advises readers to be patient in our preparation. “See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.” These days we can travel across the world in less than twenty-four hours, receive overnight packages, and find almost any fact on the Internet in seconds. We are not used be being patient in this instant-gratification-culture. But we, like the precious fruit of the earth, *must* be patient. Some parts of life, relationships, and ourselves, need time and nutrients to grow.

Advent is a season to be patient with ourselves. We try to develop habits that will deepen our relationships. Undoubtedly, we will fail…a lot…but it is about having faith that the most beautiful blooms can blossom, even in the desert. We must have patience with ourselves, others, and God. So, here’s to a week celebrating our continual journey with The Prince of Peace and Joy Incarnate.