

Edmonton

Catholic Latin Mass Community



served by the Priests of the Fraternity of St. Peter (fssp)
for the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

3rd Sunday of Advent



Michelangelo, ca. 1508, The Prophet Isaiah, Sistine Chapel

St. Anthony's Church ♦ 10661 82nd Avenue, Edmonton

December 14th, 2014

Hymns:

Mass	XVII
Processional	1, <i>On Jordan's Bank</i>
Offertory	2, <i>Rorate Caeli</i>
Recessional	5 <i>Veni, Veni, Emmanuel</i>

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The Prophet Isaias

Among the writers whom the Hebrew Bible styles the "Latter Prophets" foremost stands "Isaias, the holy prophet . . . the great prophet, and faithful in the sight of God" (Ecclasticus 48:23-25).

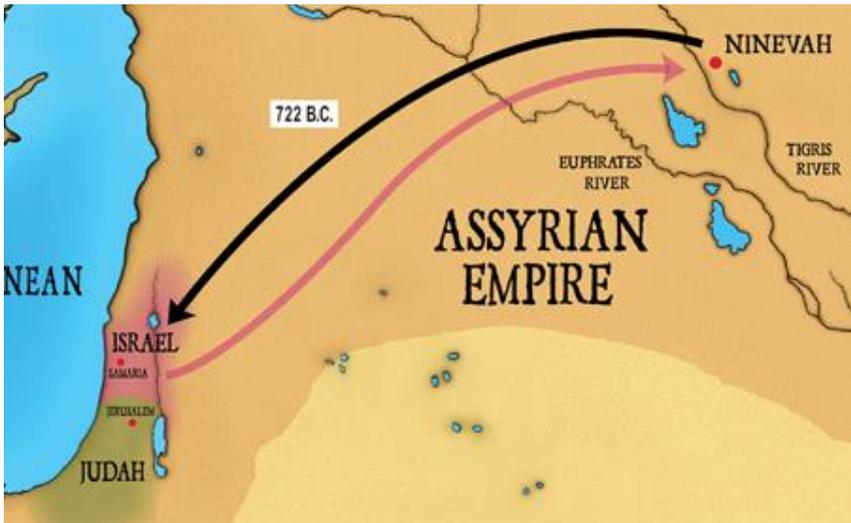
The name Isaias signifies "Yahweh is salvation". From the Prophet himself we learn that he was the son of Amos. Of Isaias's ancestry we know nothing; but several passages of his prophecies lead us to believe that he belonged to one of the best families of Jerusalem. A Jewish tradition held him to be a nephew of King Amasias. As to the exact time of the Prophet's birth we lack definite data; yet he is believed to have been about twenty years of age when he began his public ministry. He was a citizen, perhaps a native, of Jerusalem. His writings give unmistakable signs of high culture. From this we learn that he married a woman whom he styles "the prophetess" and that he had two sons.

The prophetic ministry of Isaias lasted half a century, from the closing year of Ozias, King of Juda, possibly up to that of Manasses. This period was one of great prophetic activity. Israel (the northern kingdom) and Juda (the southern kingdom) indeed were in sore need of guidance. After the death of Jeroboam II revolution followed upon revolution and the northern kingdom had sunk rapidly into an abject servitude to the Assyrians. In the meantime the Kingdom of Juda hardly fared better. A long period of peace had enervated characters, and the young, inexperienced, and unprincipled Achaz was no match for the Syro-Israelite coalition which confronted him. Panic-stricken he, in spite of the remonstrances of Isaias, resolved to appeal to Assyria for help. The help of Assyria was secured, but the independence of Juda was thereby practically forfeited.

And it came to pass in the days of Achaz the son of Joathan, the son of Ozias, king of Juda, that Basim king of Syria, and Phacee the son of Romelia king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem, to fight against it: but they could not prevail over it. And the Lord said to Isaias: Go forth to meet Achaz. And thou shalt say to him: See thou be quiet: fear not, and let not thy heart be afraid. And the Lord spoke again to Achaz, saying: Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God either unto the depth of hell, or unto the height above. And Achaz said: I will not ask, and I will not tempt the Lord. And he said: Hear ye therefore, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to be grievous to men, that you are grievous to my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel. (Isaiah 7)

It fell to the lot of Isaias to take an active part during forty troublesome years in controlling the policy of his country. His advice and rebukes were sometimes unheeded, but experience finally taught the rulers of Juda that to part from the Prophet's views meant always a set-back for the political situation of Juda. The people of Juda, forgetful of their God, given to idolatrous practices and social disorders of many kinds, had paid little heed to former warnings. One thing only alarmed them, namely that hostile nations were threatening Juda on all sides; but were they not the chosen people of God? Certainly He would not allow His own nation to be destroyed, even as others had been. In the meantime prudence dictated that the best possible means be taken to save themselves from present dangers. Syria and Israel were plotting against Juda and her king; Juda and her king would appeal to the mighty nation of the North, and later to the King of Egypt.

The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; It is the font from which all her power flows. (SC 10)



Isaias would not hear of this short-sighted policy, grounded only on human prudence, or a false religious confidence, and refusing to look beyond the moment. Juda was in terrible straits; God alone could save her; but the first condition laid down for the manifestation of His power was moral and social reformation. He first proclaimed this message at the beginning of the reign of Achaz. The king and his counsellors saw no salvation for Juda except in an alliance with Assyria, which meant they would lose their independence and freedom. This the Prophet opposed with all his might. With his keen foresight he had clearly perceived that the real danger to Juda was not from Ephraim and Syria, and that the intervention of Assyria in the affairs of Palestine involved a complete overthrow of the balance of power along the Mediterranean coast. Moreover, the Prophet entertained no doubt but that sooner or later a conflict between the rival empires of Assyria and Egypt, and then their hosts would swarm over the land of Juda. To him it was clear that the course proposed by Juda's self-conceited politicians was like the mad flight of "silly doves", throwing themselves headlong into the net. Isaias's advice was not followed and one by one the consequences he had foretold were realised.

Judean politicians towards the end of the reign of Ezechias had planned an alliance with the King of Egypt against Assyria and carefully concealed their purpose from the Prophet. When the latter came to know the preparations for rebellion, it was already too late to undo what had been done. But he could at least give vent to his anger (*Isaiah 30*), and we know both from the Bible and Sennacherib's own account of the campaign of 701 B.C. how the Assyrian army routed the Egyptians and sent a detachment to ravage Juda; Jerusalem was saved only by the payment of an enormous ransom. The vindication of Isaias's policy, however, was not yet complete. The Assyrian army withdrew; but the King of Assyria, thinking it unsafe to leave in his wake a fortified city like Jerusalem, demanded the immediate surrender of the city. At the command of Hezechia, King of Judah, no answer was given to the message; but the king humbly bade Isaias to intercede for the city. The Prophet had for the king a reassuring message. But the respite in the Judean capital was short. Soon a new

Assyrian embassy arrived with a letter from the king containing an ultimatum. In the panic-stricken city the answer was to be given to the ultimatum of the proud Assyrians: "The virgin, the daughter of Sion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; . . . He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow into it. . . . By the way that he came, he shall return, and into this city he shall not come, saith the Lord" (37:22, 33). We know in reality how a sudden catastrophe overtook the Assyrian army and God's promise was fulfilled. This crowning vindication of the divinely inspired policy of Isaias prepared the hearts of the Jews for the religious reformation brought about by Hezechiah, no doubt along lines laid down by the Prophet.

The Prophet Isaias's message

Isaias's description of the religious condition of Juda in the latter part of the eighth century is anything but flattering. Throughout the kingdom there was corruption of higher officials, ever-increasing luxury among the wealthy, shameful partiality of the judges, unscrupulous greed of the owners of large estates, and oppression of the poor and lowly. The first condition of social reformation was the downfall of the unjust and corrupt rulers; the Assyrians were the means appointed by God to level their pride and tyranny with the dust. God here appears as the avenger of disregarded human justice as much as of His divine rights. He cannot and will not let injustice, crime, and idolatry go unpunished. The destruction of sinners will inaugurate an era of regeneration, and a little circle of men faithful to God will be the first-fruits of a new Israel free from past defilements and ruled by a scion of David's House. With the reign of Hezechiah began a period of religious revival.



Announcements

Archbishop Smith's Pastoral Letter regarding Bill 10. A copy is available on our website, as well as the website of the Edmonton Archdiocese.

Sunday 7th December 2014: attendance 96 ♦ general collection \$1,810.45

Weekly Mass Schedule

DAY	DATE	TIME	FEAST DAY
Sunday	14 December	8:00 a.m.	3 rd Sunday after Pentecost (1 st class)
Monday	15 December	No Mass	Feria of Advent (3 rd cl.)
Tuesday	16 December	No Mass	St. Eusebius, <i>Bishop & Martyr</i> (3 rd cl.)
Wednesday	17 December	No Mass	Ember Wednesday in Advent (2 nd cl.)
Thursday	18 December	No Mass	Greater Feria in Advent (2 nd cl.)
Friday	19 December	6:00 p.m.	Ember Friday in Advent (2 nd cl.)
Saturday	20 December	8:00 a.m.	Ember Saturday in Advent (2 nd cl.) <i>Confessions: 6:00 – 7:20 p.m.</i>
Sunday	21 December	8:00 a.m.	4 th Sunday of Advent (1 st class)