

# Heartbeats

The Company of St. Angela in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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Second Week of Advent 2020

## Live in Harmony

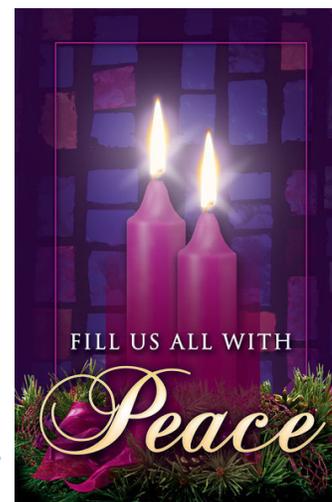
*I*n our first reading for the Second Sunday of Advent, Isaiah proclaims: “A voice cries out in the desert: prepare the way of our God! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God...The rugged land shall be made a plain, the rough country, a broad valley.”

A new day is coming. We shall repent and change our ways. We can also look at this passage literally – “a voice cries out in the desert for us to change our ways.” While we continue to lead our first world lives, desertification increases in sub-Saharan Africa, which changes fertile land to desert. This affects eleven countries in an area known as the Sahel and is partially caused by climate change. As the United States is the second leading emitter of fossil fuels, we are causing harm to countries with some of the lowest emission rates. 50 million people living in the area may become climate refugees because they can no longer earn a living from the land.

Ursuline Academy in Wilmington, Delaware, is committed to doing our part. Named a 2020 Green Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education, we have a robust recycling program, a strong reusable water bottle initiative with nine water bottle refilling stations throughout the campus, an Energy Star rating of our Upper School, 2019 Schoolyard Habitat certification, participation in Delaware’s Adopt-a-Wetland program through cleanups of our adjacent reservoir area, and a “wander and wonder” program for our Lower School. We are making our paths greener, but still have much to do to make our environment fair for everyone where “*according to God’s promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells,*” as said in the second reading from the Second Letter of Peter.

During this Christmas season of great consumption we are invited to become an Advent people, a waiting people, focused on making our paths straight by changing our hearts, creating ‘memories, not mementos’ where we value experiences and relationships and not things. We lower our carbon footprint by not buying and buying, but by contributing to organizations in which we believe, and caring about people whose lives we affect by our environmental habits. In this way we heed the words of St. Angela:

*“My last word to you . . . is that you live in harmony, united together, all of one heart and one will. Be bound to one another by the bond of charity, esteeming each other, helping each other, bearing with each other in Jesus Christ. For if you strive to be like this, without any doubt, God will be in your midst.”*



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