

# *Listening for the Promise*

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

**First Sunday of Advent — December 3, 2023**

*“But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.”*

*–Isaiah 64:8–*

George Carlin did a monologue about the difference between football and baseball. He included such clever insights as the fact that baseball takes place on a diamond in a park while football is played out on the gridiron in a stadium. He said that in football you wear a helmet, in baseball a cap. Baseball has a seventh inning stretch and football has the two minute warning. “Football has hitting, clipping, spearing, blocking, piling on, late hitting, unnecessary roughness and personal fouls. Baseball has the sacrifice,” he said. He finished the monologue with this insight: “And finally the objectives of the two games are totally different. In Football... with short bullet passes and long bombs, he (the quarterback) marches his troops into enemy territory, balancing his aerial assault with a sustained ground attack, which punches holes in the forward wall of the enemies’ defensive line. In Baseball, the object is to go home, and to be safe. I hope I’ll be safe at home, safe at home.”

Isaiah changed his attitude in today’s passage very quickly. At first he cried out to God, “Do something!” He wanted God to make His presence known in a powerful way. “Hit our enemies, clip them, spear them, block them so that they will know that you are our God and that you will continue to protect your people.” Isaiah knew, however, that even God’s chosen people sin. We are sinners and we don’t deserve anything better than we want for our enemies.

In the end Isaiah knew that God will never abandon His people. God is always ready to save us from our foolishness. Isaiah asked God to have mercy, to remember His promises, to lay His hands on His people so that they will be conformed to His will. He is the potter and we are His work. We may come to our God with a football attitude wanting Him to fight for us so that we can win on the field, but He calls us to have a baseball attitude. We needed sacrifice not battle. In Christ our goal is not to dominate but to safe at home; the lesson of Advent is that the baby for whom we wait is the assurance of His promise that we will make it home.