



PERSEVERANCE IN FAITH  
FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE  
OF THE SERVANT OF GOD  
FELIX DE JESUS ROUGIER



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have put together some ideas that we hope will help you live and also share with others the spirit of Advent as a time of hope. These reflections are centered on the first reading from each Sunday in Advent. We have illuminated these readings with the experience of Our Father (Fr. Felix Rougier), as reflected in some of his words (we're sure you'll be able to think of more examples).

It was not our intent to put together a collection of homilies, but rather simply to highlight the themes of faith and hope in God that are given to us in the readings, and contextualize them in the life of Fr. Felix. We hope that you will find them useful.

Love,

*Your brothers from the Community of St. Matthew*

# IN THE STRENGTH OF THE PROMISE

## First Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33: 14-16

### “I WILL FULLFILL THE PROMISE”

This passage of Jeremiah is found within of the “Little Book of Consolation” (chapters 31-33).

The Promises are spoken to address a dire situation. The armies of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, are advancing on Jerusalem. The streets of Jerusalem will soon be filled with the corpses of her people. The worst has not yet happened, but it is inevitable. Any reasonable person can see that the city is doomed. Yet now, in the midst of catastrophe, the prophet finally speaks words of promise. In the previous chapter, he has purchased a piece of land—a foolish thing to do in a country soon to be conquered by invading armies. And in Chapter 33 the prophet speaks of the coming restoration, the restoration of normal, everyday life. There will come a time in the land of Judah when the “the song of joy, the song of gladness, the song of the bridegroom, the song of the bride” (33: 10-11) shall be heard once more.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah (33, 14). The Davidic line will not return to the throne, but there is hope for the coming of an ideal ruler, the Messiah. The promise made to David is fulfilled: “a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse” (Is. 11:1).

This promise should not be understood as simply a historical prediction to be checked off when it corresponds to a certain event. Rather the promise, the Word of the Lord, is nothing less than the faithfulness of God that calls the people to live in trust of that faithfulness, even in Exile.

### Reflected in Fr. Felix

*Fr. Ricardo Zimbrón summarizes in these words the situation of Fr. Felix during his exile in Spain: “Father Felix continued to hold to two convictions which seemed to be ever more contradictory: on the one hand, his decision to obey faithfully till the end; and on the other, the firm conviction that the promise God had made to him through Conchita would be fulfilled. Like Abraham: ‘he believed God and hoped against all hope’” (Risking the Future, p. 32).<sup>1</sup>*

*When Fr. Felix arrives Mexico in order to found of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, His Excellency Francisco Orozco, Archbishop of Guadalajara, who was on his way to Havana said to Fr. Felix: “Father Felix, this is not the time to found anything in Mexico. We cannot even minister to the people. All the Bishops have had to go underground. Go back to Havana with me and I will help you do everything.” Fr. Felix responded, “Thank you, Archbishop, but I have waited ten years to be able to return to Mexico, and from the beginning I had been warned that I would establish this community ‘in the midst of the agony of the country.’” The archbishop replied, “You are out of your mind! But If God wills it, go in peace, because the country is in real agony...” (Risking the Future, p. 39-40)<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from the electronic version of *Risking the Future* by Fr. Ricardo Zimbrón Levy MSPS:

<http://www.apcross.org/felixdejesus/RiskingtheFuture-LifeandSpiritualityF%C3%A9lixdeJes%C3%BAs.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

# FOR HE HAS DONE EVERYTHING

## Second Sunday of Advent (Our Lady of Guadalupe)

Baruch 5: 1-9

**“FOR GOD HAS COMMADED THAT EVERY LOFTY MOUNTAIN BE MADE LOW ...  
AND GORGES BE FILLED”**

Baruch was the secretary of Jeremiah. In his name he wrote a book that promises a return to Jerusalem for those in exile. The book, as it exists now, may have been written in the first century before Christ in Hebrew and then translated into Greek. This was also a very difficult time for the Jews; and the author brings to it the thoughts of the prophet.

Just as in Isaiah 52:1, 61:3-10 the prophet asks Jerusalem to abandon its mourning and put on its glorious garments. Jerusalem is proclaimed “the peace of justice.” This is the work of God. The return of the exiled is like a new creation. As in Isaiah 40:3 the mountains are turned into valleys. God is close to his people, like the column of fire in the dessert.

It is God himself who prepares the way... we also see how Our Lady of Guadalupe prepared the way for a new Mexico, etc.

### **Reflected in Fr. Félix**

*Conchita said to Fr. Felix that in the difficult moments he should try to do everything that was in his power and then let God work. “God will do everything.”*

*One of the last things Fr. Felix said before he died was: “He has done everything.”*

# FOR GOD HAS REMOVED ALL THE OBSTACLES (SIN)

## Third Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3: 14-18

### **“THE LORD HAS REMOVED THE JUDGMENT AGAINST YOU...HE WILL RENEW YOU IN LOVE”**

In this text we have an account of the experience of liberation that is characteristic of a prophet who lived at the moment of the return from exile. There is an expectation that the joy will be permanent. It is a joy that fully envelopes the person.

However there is still fear, worry, and timidity in some. In these verses the prophet wants to strengthen their faith: “God is in your midst.” God has already forgiven, but the shadows of guilt still remain.

The book of Zephaniah comes to an end repeating that God will bring the exiled back to their land in victory.

### **Reflected in Fr. Felix**

*1909: “I deeply feel that I am not... that I am thousands of miles from being what I desire... and it is a temptation to feel so horrible and because of that to not have the faith and intimacy that Jesus asks of those who belong to Him... to feel so distant!... the only thing that brings me consolation, and very rarely, is to see how many people don't love Him and even hate Him, while I, despite being a disgusting trash heap, always love Him at least a little bit; and He, being as good as he is, cannot reject me...” (3er Congreso Internacional, p. 225)<sup>3</sup>*

*November 1910: “I constantly feel that horrible temptation, not strong but constant, and it sort of paralyzes me, to feel a wall between Jesus and me, between Mary and me, because of how much I have offended God (but I hope without mortal sins) and my lack of correspondence... Reading the note that you gave to me does me a lot of good in dealing with this interior sorrow. [He refers to a note from Conchita]: “Fr. Felix, distance your gaze from the past, everything has been forgiven and covered by the Blood of Christ.”(3er Congreso Internacional, p. 225)<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Taken from the book edited by Fr. Edmundo de los Santos MSpS, Memoria: Espiritualidad de la Cruz Amor que Salva, 3er Congreso Internacional.

<sup>4</sup> Ibíd.

# DESPITE OUR INSIGNIFICANCE

## Fourth Sunday of Advent

Micah 5: 1-4

**“YOU, BETHLEHEM-EPHRATHAH, TOO SMALL TO BE AMONG THE CLANS OF JUDAH, FROM YOU SHALL COME FORTH FOR ME ONE WHO IS TO BE RULER IN ISRAEL”**

This text was written in the time after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem during which many had lost hope; but regardless of this, God promises a savior.

On the one hand the people see their smallness. And in fact, the Hebrew word used to say that Bethlehem is small has a connotation of insignificance.

The text says: “from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler...” This implies that what will take place will happen according to the will of God. It is important to note that here the text does not use the word “king” as it does in other places. There will no longer be a king. Instead it speaks of a ruler or leader. This marks a new beginning brought forth by God.

The prophet speaks of a woman who will give birth as is also found in Isaiah 7:14. With these words the prophet connects the current hope with Isaiah’s messianic prophecy.

At the end of the text the prophet presents a vision of plentitude, peace, wellbeing, happiness and hope.

### Reflected in Fr. Felix

*November 1907 during his exile: “I have seen here, in practice, that I am not capable of anything, that I am ignorant, imprudent, that I lack many virtues, that I have very bad inclinations, etc.; and yet Our Lord in his goodness, has not permitted that I lose hope, even for one second... And when the Reverend Father Provincial told me that one of the things that instilled doubt in the Very Reverend Father General was that he did not consider me apt for such a great undertaking, this did NOT discourage me either, for I have considered that I do not matter in all these great things that will be done, and I firmly believe that Our Lord will accomplish them despite my notable incapacity.”*

*“I just pray, with all my heart, to be a humble, docile, reliable instrument, crucified and as far as it is possible, hidden. This task does not depend on my despicable and miserable self” (3er Congreso Internacional, p. 227)<sup>5</sup>.*

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.