Spirituality
Scripture for Life



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Today's readings invite us to ponder a promise given to us in the second reading from 2 Peter: "But according to his promise we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." Even though the liturgical season of Advent recurs every year, we are perpetually waiting, whether in the desert or on a high mountain top.

We are waiting not only for the transformative arrival, once again, of our God but also for that promised new heavens and earth. Gentleness, kindness, justice and peace, and the assertion of power used to nurture and not to oppress are characteristics of this promised new heavens and new earth, a promise also heard in Isaiah 65:17-25 and Revelation 21, that culminates with the Divine dwelling with and in the midst of humanity, and humanity dwelling with and in the Divine. That which is promised to us by our God will not be delayed.

This divine promise reminds me of a book by the self-described "geologian" Thomas Berry entitled *The Great Work: Our Way Into the Future*, published in 1999 before the turn of the millennium. In this work, Berry made clear that the human community is transitioning out of the Cenozoic Era, a time of profound wonder, beauty and marvel. In his works Berry also said that we may transition into a Technozoic Era. This is where we find ourselves today — living in a world where technology is advancing at lightning speed.

Second Sunday of Advent

December 6, 2026

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11
Psalm 85
2 Peter 3:8-14
Mark 1:1-8

Berry argued that we cannot stay in this Technozoic Era that fragments all kinds of relationships. For Berry, the human community needs to advance into the Ecozoic Era, that has as its hallmarks integrity, justice, the cultivation of living and not virtual relationships, and the ability to see the interrelatedness of all life, including

the earth story as part of a much larger universe story.

This Ecozoic Era opposes the exploitation of the natural world, seeks to create a more viable context for human life to develop and flourish within the planetary process, and sees Earth as a biospiritual planet. In the Ecozoic Era, life is lived in a new context, in the great commons of the planet Earth whereby all resources are shared in proportion to the need among all members of the Earth community.

Community is redefined to mean a single integral community of the Earth and includes all living species, with humans as part of the whole and not the dominant species. Reciprocal support is extended to all members in the Earth community, and all members have their own dignity, inner spontaneity, voice, rights and roles to fulfill.

Personal security and personal property are protected, and ownership of property includes a personal relation to property, one that safeguards the well-being of the property, the community and the individual owner. The rights of ethnic groups and impoverished classes are recognized. Language is not only human-centered but also earth-centered, with humans learning to listen to the language of the more-than-human and the natural world. In the Ecozoic Era, the natural world is the primary economic reality, educator, governance, technologist, healer, presence of the sacred, and moral value. Life lived in the Ecozoic Era is life lived in relationship.

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In Berry's view, living life in this fully relational way and in this newly created context will have at least three transformative effects for the human community. First, the capacity for celebration will be deepened; second, the deeply spiritual within all will be roused, making it possible for the human to recognize a spirit world existing and active beyond the human; and third, powerful and creative forces will be awakened within the human to bring forth new and different forms of artistic expressions and symbols that showcase new understandings of life. And finally, the feeling of entrancement that humans once felt in the Cenozoic Era will be recovered.

To arrive at the new heavens and the new earth in the context of a new era, a shift in consciousness has to happen. This entails moving out of depersonalization and dehumanization and into a time of recovery when humans had a deeper intimacy

with the cosmos, with all creation; breaking free from the addictive and all-absorbing choke hold that technology has on the human intellect and spirit, so that the reactivation of the human imagination by the natural world and within the larger framework of the cosmos can occur; and changing from being totally absorbed with the material and the outer world to being attentive to our inner life in order to recover the psyche.

This shift in consciousness is the key to hastening the arrival of the new heavens and new earth. A divine promise is given to us. How long will we wait before we prepare the way for the Divine?