

Snow in the Bible (Jan. 21, 2018)

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“Yet just as from the heavens
the rain and snow come down
And do not return there
till they have watered the earth,
making it fertile and fruitful,
Giving seed to the one who sows
and bread to one who eats,
So shall my word be
that goes forth from my mouth;
It shall not return to me empty,
but shall do what pleases me,
achieving the end for which I sent it.”

— Isaiah 55:10-11

Do not be startled to learn that depictions of God’s creation should remind us of — well, God! We find about 27 references to snow in both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. This winter is giving us an above average reason to think about the white stuff. And maybe to pray about it.

The above verses from the Book of Isaiah are among my favorites. They support our reason for proclaiming aloud the Scriptures at Mass. The lector and the deacon or priest unleash (unchain?) God’s word as an active force with a life of its own. Whether we feel them or not, the words get to work inside of us. No matter how we feel when we come to church, we ingest that message both consciously and not.

This being true, a parish church’s working “sound system” is worth the care and expense. As St. Paul has written, “Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). Imagine each word proclaimed as a snowflake. Assigning significant authority to any one flake may seem foolish until we consider the question, “Which snowflake causes the avalanche?” We just don’t know when the power of God’s word will cascade within our hearts and actions. But any disciple welcomes both the risk and the reward.

This concludes today’s lesson. And we can make a faith response to the riddle, “When is snow not just snow?”