

# PRESIDENT'S OFFICE



Rev. Justin Panzer | District President



**“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”**

**(Isaiah 11:1-2)**

**“Get back to your roots.”** It’s a simple phrase that means we must consider who we are through appreciating our past and the meaning of our history.

But most people are cut off from their past. That rootlessness is often magnified at Christmas, and especially for people who have been uprooted from their immediate families, whether by divorce, distance or conflict. Traditional human connections are the stuff of real, daily life. We may dismiss our past by describing it as “baggage” or “issues.” This is true when we feel that our past or our family history is embarrassing, too humble or even too foreign.

But even our Lord Jesus Christ had a root, a source, a history. His source from eternity was His heavenly Father from whom He was ever begotten, without beginning or end. Late in time, He comes as the offspring of the Virgin’s womb. He comes from the root of Jesse. Isaiah was intending to say that the sign of the King’s return is humble, unexpected, even foreign. No one

looks at the shoot that comes from the root of Jesse and declares His glory, or names Him King. His roots do not attract us to Him. He is of the cut down house of Jesse.

**Christ is not rootless. He comes from humble, human stock. His roots tell us how much like us He is. Our Lord is true man born of the Virgin Mary. He comes from God as God of God. His root is fixed in eternity. He comes from God and returns to God so that we might know who is born of Mary and comes from the stump of Jesse. It is good for us to know what our roots really are. If we are in Him, then we are rooted in God.**

Martin Luther writes:

“His resting place shall be glorious” (Isaiah 11:10) that is, death, the end of life, the departure from this life. The death of all other kings is the end of their reign. But Christ will reign gloriously from His death forward, and this signifies His resur-

rection from the dead. In Psalm 8:4 we read: “What is man, etc.?” The prophet calls death a rest and cessation from labors, glory after shame. To the world He seems dead and mute and inglorious. But He lives and reigns in glory. Therefore, we have three elements here: (1) the raising of the ensign through the gospel; (2) the act of seeking, receiving, and believing; (3) the object of faith, the Root, that is, Christ, who reigns though dead. When the prophets speak of Christ’s reign, they speak of His humanity and of His divinity. The Root of Jesse points to the man. The fact that the nations seek Him shows that He is God. Earlier the prophet wrote: “Should not a people inquire of their God” (Isaiah 8:19)? Glory and faithfulness belong to God alone, who alone helps and saves.”

*Lectures on Isaiah 11:10*

**God bless your Christmas celebration as each and every one of us returns “to our roots!”**