

The Second Sunday of Advent
Prepare the Way of the Lord

On this second week of Advent, John the Baptist makes his appearance, and he calls us to prepare the way of the Lord. John is a strange figure; we might even say an antisocial figure. He lives in the wilderness eating a strange diet of locusts and wild honey. I suspect that if we encountered him, we would be taken aback. He is the kind of person we might like to see once, from a distance, but we certainly wouldn't want to see him too often, or up close.

But as strange and as off-putting as John was, he attracted a crowd. He attracted all kinds of people. And when they came, he didn't mince words. He spoke directly and forcefully. "It's time to get things in order, because time is running out. It's time to change and reform your lives, because God is about to do something new, something different. And if you have not reformed your lives, you will not be part of the salvation God has in store for the world."

The Prophet Isaiah gives us an insight to the salvation God has in store for us. The wolf will be the guest of the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion will shall browse together. This is like saying there will be complete and total peace in the Mideast. Muslims and Jews and Christians, and everybody else, will live in harmony and peace with each other. How is this possible?

It is only possible if God brings it about; it is only possible if we welcome one another as Christ welcomed us as St. Paul tells us in today's second reading. Justice can flourish in our time, as the Responsorial Psalm of today's Mass proclaims. But before it does, we must reform and change our lives so that we will be prepared for God's salvation. For, while salvation is a gift that only God can give, we must be ready and prepared to accept it.

Consider for a moment the circumstances of your own life. Are there barriers that need to be broken down, fences that need mending? Are there people with whom you need to be reconciled? Are there people you are still excluding and refusing to let into your life? Are there relationships that need to be healed and mended? If there are, then you are not ready for God's salvation. If there are, you will not be able to share in that salvation when it appears.

Advent is my favorite time. It's not more important than Easter, but it is still my favorite time because it fills me with so much hope. It reminds me that God will do what I cannot do. It reminds me that it's time to reform my own life so that I can accept the gift of salvation that only God can give. *Father Matera*

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception: Thursday, December 8,
Masses at 8:00 AM, 12:15 PM, and 6:00 PM.

Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent

Monday evenings, 6:00 to 7:00 and Saturdays from 3:00 to 4:00

We are coming to the final weeks of our Capital Campaign,
if you have not yet participated please consider doing so.