

# The 2nd. Sunday of Advent (Prepare the Way) (Luke 3-1-6)

The Gospel begins with the words from the Prophet Isaiah which John the Baptist claims as his own :

A voice of one crying out in the desert,  
“Prepare the way of the Lord,  
Make straight His paths”

IT's a time of Renewal ... a time to be refreshed once again.....  
that's what the Advent season is about !

Looking once again at the whole idea of how I am Preparing the Way of the Lord in my own life, not just for The Christmas celebration, but for the much bigger question .... How am I acting and preparing myself for His Second Coming .... The Final Events? While it is good to be preparing for Christmas, it is especially good to be also preparing my plan for Eternal Life, and my plans to be with him Forever.

John takes up his post in the desert region of the Jordan valley 'Proclaiming a Baptism of Repentance for the forgiveness of sins' — Wow what a bold man, to hear the invitation of the Lord and then unabashedly taking up his mission.

Many I am sure had opinions about his clothing, his appearance, his diet, and yet he had huge numbers of people coming to him and asking what must we do ?

St. Matthew describes it thus :

“At that time Jerusalem, all Judaea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him. They were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.

When he saw that many of the Pharisees and Sadducees were stepping forward for this bath, he said to them :

‘You brood of vipers ! Who told you to flee from the wrath to come ? Give some evidence that you mean to reform.

Wow .. they were some tough words ! Very challenging, he could have received some serious feed-back from some of those leaders ..... but there doesn't appear to be any resistance. I can imagine some tough guy saying “Oh shut-up your talking .... just give us the baptism” !

The amazing thing to me is that his mission really caught the attention of so many people. They were very possibly influenced by the idea that the End was very near, which was a common perception in those days ..... we might have shifted too far to the other side in our present age, and we are sometimes lulled by the idea that there is plenty of time ‘I'll get back to that later’ ..... for many it doesn't work very well that way !

Jesus' invitation is to always ‘Be ready’ for we know not the time ! So using this Advent as a preparation for celebrating Christ's coming into our world originally, and making it a preparation for His return can be and extremely helpful practice in my life.

Those people in the Jordan region heard John's voice and were very compelled by his invitation ..... Whose voice do you hear ? What voices stir you into action ?

A little over 2 weeks ago there were some voices that brought allegations of wrong-doing against a priest in our diocese. It led to a raid on the diocesan offices, and a search for records, in order to substantiate the claims made in the indictment ! It generated a whole storm of claims, and judgements, and assertions, and a large number of Why was this not done, or that not done. It generated a frenzy of action and activity. Nobody appeared to know exactly what was going on, but that did not prevent a lot of chatter, and observations, and judgements from being made.

This past Tuesday, the Bishop had a meeting with us priests from this area, along with an Advent Prayer Service. Three more meetings are scheduled in other parts of the diocese to take place this coming week. After the prayer, the Bishop spoke to us about the events, making clear to us from the outset, that the HIPPA restriction had been lifted, so that he could speak directly to us about the events, when they had received information, how they had received it, and how they had responded to all of that. Now, it didn't answer all of the questions, and the financial issues, it will still take time to sort all of those, but a process is in place to try and establish all of those things and to make an appropriate response.

This information differed greatly from some of the allegations ! Not a surprising reality ! Right ?

Now following last week's Homily, and my questions about God !  
—What are some of the teachings, the voices in my wilderness that I have heard, learned, or been taught, along the way about God that are certainly untrue?

Here is one of my earliest recollections :

59 years ago this past Thursday my mother died. 59 years ago today, one of her favorite feasts, she was laid to rest.

I was seven years old, we were 7 kids between the ages of 13 and 2 ..... It was tough times, a lot of people had pity on us ..... we really didn't need pity we needed help working through this .....we need to talk through what was happening and how to move forward ..... there was a prevailing sense 'this is God's will' and we have got to work our way through it and pray more. We went to school, and the Sisters told us : God needed your mommy. I knew in the pit of my stomach that there was something wrong with that..... but it seemed to be the prevailing belief and there didn't appear to be anyone who thought differently about it and so nobody talked about it.

What I did know in my heart is that if this is God's will, I don't want to have anything to do with him ..... If He takes those whom I love, and am close to arbitrarily then I can't trust Him. Those thoughts remained a long time in my life. When I had grown beyond them, there remained for a long time 'but what if they were right' ? I still have to struggle with those thoughts ! But as we begin to get to know the God we believe in, the truth crystallizes and we begin to trust that voice, not the voice of my wilderness.

What other things have I / You picked up along the way about God that i need to let go of ? What about this one :

— God is always watching me and sees and knows everything I have done .....(and He is pretty chapped when I am bad ..... that one had a pretty bad affect on me at times ..... Was afraid of

coming into church, kinda afraid to look up .... he might be eyeballing me!)

For the longest time nobody ever told me He was *for* me, not against me .... He was desiring my good even more than i was desiring it myself .... That made a big difference.

Another strange one :

— God's Happiness / Sadness depended on my Behavior !

Wow I felt He had a few rough days thrown in there .... some days when He didn't feel too good, and neither did I !

So what others do you need to let go of ?

Write in and let me know!