

Homily on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent  
St. John Paul II Parish, Cedar Springs, Michigan  
Mary Queen of Apostles Parish, Sand Lake, Michigan  
Father Lam T. Le, Pastor  
December 9, 2018

“Proclaiming a Baptism of **Repentance** for the Forgiveness of Sins”  
(Lk 3:3)

Recalling from last week, the purpose of this season is reflection on and preparation for the two “comings” of Christ: His coming as a baby on the great feast of Christmas and the anticipation of His second coming at the end of time. Preparation is the key word for this season. The Holy Scriptures on this 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent teach us how to prepare:

In the Gospel of Luke, John the Baptist was appointed to announce the arrival of our Savior. Through the Baptist, we are told how to celebrate to the fullest this first “coming” on the feast of Christmas and how to prepare for the second coming — through repentance: “the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. John went throughout the whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Lk 3:2-3). We need to highlight that at the center of John’s message is the word **repentance**. To repent, in Greek **metanoia**, means to see things upside down. The Baptist calls for a change of heart and conduct, a turning of one’s life from rebellion to obedience toward God.

The Savior, the Holy One, is about to visit the human family and our individual hearts, therefore we really need to see things upside down. We need to see things from the value of God instead of from the perspective of this world. For example, this world sometimes is saturated with the thoughts and promotions of war and violence. We need to train our thinking and our desire for peace, the peace that Jesus, the Prince of Peace will bring to the human family. The Baptist presents to us the best way to create a warm and hospitable place in our spiritual home for the Great Visitor, the Lord Jesus. It is to push away the darkness of sin and make room for the light of God. Thus from quoting the prophet Baruch which is our first reading, “For God has commanded that every lofty mountain be made low...that Israel may advance secure in the glory of God” (Bar 5:7), the Baptist expanded this exhortation with the information taken from the prophet Isaiah: “*Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God*” (Lk 3: 4-6).

What are the spiritual valleys, mountains and hills, winding roads, and rough ways in us? Some of that could be our addictions, sinful behaviors, and sinful associations that we maintain our membership in. This 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent is a wonderful time to examine our hearts and open them up for the grace of God to remove these obstacles.

When we are open to **metanoia**, to see things upside down, the prayer of St. Paul in the second reading, the letter to the Philippians, “I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus,” (Phil 1:6) is the prayer for all us Christian people awaiting the visitation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Second Sunday of Advent calls for preparation in term of **repentance/metanoia!** Amen.

**Scriptural Readings:**

Reading 1 *BAR 5:1-9*; Responsorial Psalm *PS 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6*; Reading 2 *PHIL 1: 4-6, 8-11*;  
Alleluia *LK 3:4, 6*; Gospel *LK 3: 1-6*

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