

Reflection for the 2nd Sunday of Advent

A Voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." Luke 3:4

We are here today celebrating the Second Sunday of Advent and our Gospel this Sunday makes a reference to the Book of the prophet Isaiah. In fact, all four of the Gospels when speaking of St. John, the Baptist the last of the Prophets, the bridge between the old and new Covenant all make a reference to the Book of the Prophet Isaiah Chapter 40: 3-5. This year our Gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Advent is no different from the last years Gospel Reading for this Sunday and is very similar to the Gospel Reading that we will have next year. All three Gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke where the Gospel Reading is taken from for the Second Sunday of Advent have a similar message.

These three Gospels all speak of St. John the Baptist arriving before Jesus Christ starts His public ministry, and he prepares the world for the coming of the Savior. St. John's message is one of proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Every year as we celebrate the Second Sunday of Advent we can come away from the celebration with a deeper appreciation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the importance that it has in our lives and in the salvific history of the world.

It does seem very appropriate that on the Second Sunday of this Season of preparation we have a reminder that before Jesus Christ started His public ministry the last of the Prophets came to prepare the world through the forgiveness of sins. So, if we wish to embrace this Season of preparation, we need to embrace the forgiveness of our loving Lord. This does seem like a complete message for the Second Sunday of Advent what more needs to be said?

A couple of years ago, read a book titled *Come Lord Jesus, Meditations on the Art of Waiting*, this book was published in 2010, 4 years after the author, Mother Mary Francis passed away. The book contains the edited conferences for Advent that Mother Mary Francis the Abbess of the Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Roswell New Mexico, shared with the Nuns in the Monastery. I had a desire to read this book after I read a meditation in the December issue of the Magnificat that provided an excerpt from the chapter for the Second Sunday of Advent.

This Advent I would invite you to make this consent to be forgiven because this is a very unique gift to God. He, as God, can show mercy; He cannot receive it. As God, He is the Lord of forgiveness, but He cannot be forgiven. We can say, in our human way of expressing a real truth of God before which all our human language limps and falters, that we can contribute something to God, who cannot be forgiven. And so, let us bring to Him in everything that we strive to do this Advent this consent to be forgiven, this gift of being forgiven. When He, with Lordly mercy, promises to throw all our faults and our sins into the sea, let us not put on the diving equipment of pride and go right down and bring them up again.

This quote from Mother Mary Francis, can provide us with a deeper understanding of the message contained within Second Sunday of Advent. Her meditation for this Sunday of Advent invites us to see an opportunity that we are given to embrace forgiveness. For as we choose to be forgiven, we provide God with the gift of being able to forgive. I would think that most of us focus on God providing us with a gift when we are forgiven by him. This is where Mother Mary Francis', provides us with a deeper and more complete understanding of forgiveness. This act of forgiveness is a gift to the person that is forgiven but also it is a gift to the one that forgives. The act of forgiving is the act of sharing love, compassion, and understanding, this act is as life giving to the one who forgives as it is to the one who is forgiven.

Our, consent to be forgiven by God not only changes our lives and promotes God's salvific plan for the world, but it also enables God to function as God. Now please do not misunderstand me, I am not saying that

God needs us, nor is He dependent on us. What I am saying is that, for God to forgive we must be willing to be forgiven. Our God does not need forgiving. We the imperfect ones, must be willing to be forgiven and saved so that God, can forgive and save us. In this Advent Season that is a time of preparing for the celebration of the birth of the Savior of the world, we have an opportunity to give a gift to our God, to be willing to be forgiven.