

Prepare the Way of the Lord, we prepare the Way by Expanding our Vision

As we gather on this Second Sunday of Advent, we continue our journey as God's family, moving forward in hope. Advent is a season that reminds us of God's faithful promise through our ancestors – a promise fulfilled in Christ, our Messiah. This Sunday, the Church invites us once again to listen to the voice crying out in the wilderness: **"Prepare the way of the Lord; make his path straight"**.

The first reading from Isaiah gives us a great message of hope. Isaiah speaks of a **shoot from the stump of Jesse**, a tiny sign of life emerging from what looked dead. This shoot is the promised Messiah – filled with the Spirit of God, wise, just, and righteous. He will not rule with **force or violence**, but with **peace and fairness**.

Isaiah paints a beautiful picture of a world transformed by God: **"The wolf lives with the lamb.....the leopard with the kid....and a little child shall lead them"**. This is not fantasy. Isaiah tells us that if we truly welcome Christ, peace, justice, and harmony can grow even in places that seem lifeless or hostile. Christ brings **unity where there is division** and **hope where everything seems lost**.

In the second reading, St Paul encourages us to draw strength from the Scriptures: **" Everything that was written long ago in the Scriptures was meant to teach us something about hope....."**. Hope keeps us united – people of different cultures, backgrounds, and languages – just as the early Church learned to live in harmony. Paul reminds us that Jesus came to fulfill God's promise to Israel and to bring mercy to all nations. In Him, **all peoples have hope**.

Today's Gospel introduces **John the Baptist**, the herald of the Messiah. After centuries of silence, a prophet appears again in Israel – rough, simple, and totally dedicated to God. From the barren wilderness, John proclaims a powerful message. **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand!"**

John reminds us that Advent is not mainly about **external** preparations – it is about **inner** renewal. It is a season to slow down, reflect, and clear away the rough edges of our lives. John tells us plainly: **without holiness, we cannot see the Lord**. His call to repentance is not about fear, but about freedom. To repent is to **change direction** – to return to God with a **new heart**. John warns that we must bear good fruit: compassion, justice, honesty, generosity, mercy.

Advent begins in the wilderness – where life seems barren, voices are few, and hope seems distant. Yet, it is precisely there that God acts. Where we see dead stumps, God sees new shoots. Where life seems dry, God brings forth fruit. This is the miracle of Advent: God brings life out of death, hope out of desolation, and new beginnings out of what seems lost. The Messiah comes to heal broken relationships – between God, among people, and even **within creation**. Advent calls us to walk both an **inner path** of repentance and an **outer path** of justice, peace, and compassion.

As we continue this sacred journey, the readings invite us to three simple but powerful steps: **Let Christ be born in us each day**. Advent is a time to renew our hearts through prayer, forgiveness, and acts of kindness. As the mystic Angelus Silesius said: “Christ could be born a thousand times in Bethlehem, but it would be in vain unless He is born in me”. **Accept John’s invitation to real change**: True repentance means mending relationships, letting go of grudges, living honestly, and putting love into action. Begin where you are – with your family, workplace, parish, and community. **Wait prayerfully for the Lord**: We prepare for Christmas, but also for Christ’s daily coming into our hearts – and His final coming in glory. The best way to wait is with prayer, especially the Holy Mass, and by seeking reconciliation and peace.

May this Advent season turn our wilderness into fruitfulness, our fears into peace, and our hearts into a dwelling place for Christ. Let us prepare the way of the Lord with hope, joy, and renewed love.