

Hope

Second Sunday of Advent – Baruch 5: 1-9; Philippians 1: 4-6, 8-11; Gospel – Luke 3: 1-6

I don't know about the rest of you but, for me, the last few weeks have really been difficult. California has been on fire with an entire town gone. Mothers and children are being tear gassed at the border. Alaska has been shaken by an earthquake causing the upheaval of highways and homes. The world is filled with anger, violence and chaos. It's as if every time we turn around something else has happened. I am tired of reading that someone else has shot, killed or destroyed the lives of innocent people due to a personal grudge, or worse, the hatred of the other who is not like them due to race, religion or economic status. So where is the hope in the middle of this mess?

All three readings, on this second Sunday of Advent, point to God's plan for the people of the world. These scriptures are filled with a message of hope. The prophet, Baruch, encourages the people of Israel to **"take off your robe of mourning and misery, put on the splendor of glory from God forever."** The prophet is offering the exiled people of his time the hope that their exiled children are coming home. This is a miracle that can only be from God. The hope that comes from this miracle is a reminder to all of us that God is ever-present in our lives, **"For God has commanded that every lofty mountain be made low, and the age-old depths and gorges be filled to level ground."**

This is not the study of geography, but rather, a testimony that God can and will change the troubled hearts and interior landscapes of people toward the divine mercy of God. This is the message for our journey through Advent and toward the birth of Christ. We are being called to *metanoia*, a full renovation of our lives.

St. Paul speaks of this same hope **"that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus."** Our salvation began on the day of our baptism, but our true, full conversion will take a lifetime. We must practice a life of hopeful longing, committing ourselves to know Christ better each day, working toward justice and mercy for all.

Luke writes to the gentile people of his time about the universality of John the Baptist's message of hope. Luke reminds his audience (and us) that powerful leaders are not in charge of our hearts and souls. It is only through God that conversion happens. It is only in Jesus that our full transformation will occur. It is only in the vast landscape of our soul that we can work to carve out a place for Christ.

John proclaims this message today. We must turn toward God whose full expression for us is Jesus. It is through Jesus that **"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 the flesh shall see the salvation of God."**

God is in the middle of all the violence, the heartache, the injustice and the chaos. This is the same God who brought order to the universe through the creation of the world. This is the same God, manifest in Jesus Christ, that offers us hope and order in these dark times. It is Jesus who changes our own personal lives and interior landscape. On our part, we are called to be open to this message. We are called, during this season of Advent, to let the hope, joy and anticipation of the birth of Christ seep into every part of our being, filling in the rough terrain of our souls.

Happy Advent


Sue Schettler

December 9, 2018

The Season of Advent



Readings for the
Second Week
of Advent

Readings for the week of December 9, 2018

Sunday: Bar 5:1-9/Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6 [3]/Phil 1:4-6, 8-11/Lk 3:1-6

Monday: Is 35:1-10/Ps 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14 [Is 35:4f]/Lk 5:17-26

Tuesday: Is 40:1-11/Ps 96:1-2, 3 and 10ac, 11-12, 13 [Is 40:10ab]/Mt 18:12-14

Wednesday: Zec 2:14-17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab/Jdt 13:18bcde, 19 [15:9d]/Lk 1:26-38 or Lk 1:39-47

Thursday: Is 41:13-20/Ps 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab [8]/Mt 11:11-15

Friday: Is 48:17-19/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6 [Jn 8:12]/Mt 11:16-19

Saturday: Sir 48:1-4, 9-11/Ps 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19 [4]/Mt 17:9a, 10-13

Next Sunday: Zep 3:14-18a/Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6 [6]/Phil 4:4-7/Lk 3:10-18



Week 2

Thanks to
Nick, Lisa, Eli and Emmet
Warson
for lighting
the Advent Wreath
this week.



Advent

is a time to spend in
reflection and prayer.

It is a time to prepare our
lives to receive Christ
at

Christmas!