

Second Sunday of Advent

Scripture Reflection by Father Dave

A famous story is told about St Francis of Assisi and one of his closest followers, Brother Juniper. Brother Juniper had been impressed with St Francis' marvelous gift of preaching and asks Francis to teach him how to preach – he would like to preach as well as Francis does. St Francis pauses for a moment and then says: “I will teach you to preach even better than I do.”

The next day Brother Juniper joins Francis to begin his instruction in the art of preaching. Instead of heading for the Library or Church as Juniper had expected, they head out into the streets and begin to walk all through the town. Down the twisting, narrow filthy streets they go. As they pass the townspeople, the water-carriers, the women with their meager supplies of bread and meat, and the merchants in their grand attire, Francis greets each one. For some there is simply a warm smile and word of friendship, for others a gentle touch of concern, for others a helping hand. Brother Juniper watches with astonishment as he sees Francis reach out and take a basket of washing from an old woman and carry it to her home. This goes on all morning until he cannot contain his bewilderment. “Brother Francis, when will you begin to teach me to preach?” Silence. Then, with a wry smile, St Francis replies - “But we are preaching.”

There are plenty of examples of Christians who seem to spend their energy and time looking at the mess of the people around them and chastising them for their wickedness. It is vitally important that we recognize our sinfulness and repent. However, the message of Christ goes beyond the wickedness of sin and it points to the glory and the joy of a life lived with God. We are called in this holy time to turn away from our foolishness and turn towards the life of grace. Here lies the essence of the prophet's call – to free hearts from despair and lead them into hope.

As followers of the Lord we are called to be prophets in the tradition of Baruch and John the Baptist. We are called to cry out – “look to the East, to where the glory of God dawns.” During this time of Advent we prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ at Christmas. In Christ we see that God – is – always – with – us, Emmanuel. Every situation is touched by the presence and the consolation of God. It is our joyful task to discover these signs of God's presence and to encourage others to do the same. During this coming week let us pay attention to the situations in which we may find ourselves, and let us become attentive to God – with – us in each and every situation. Then we will be able, like Francis, like Baruch, and like John the Baptist, to preach eloquently of the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ.



Hanukkah

As we Christians prepare for our Feast of Lights (Christmas), let us remember our Jewish Brothers who are celebrating their Festival of Lights.

Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, is a Jewish festival commemorating the recovery of Jerusalem and subsequent rededication of the Second Temple at the beginning of the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid Empire in the 2nd century BCE. This year, their celebration began November 28 and continues thru Monday, December 6. According to the Book of Maccabees, the Maccabees successfully revolted against Antiochus IV Epiphanes. According to the Talmud, a later text, the Temple was purified and the wicks of the Menorah miraculously burned for eight days, even though there was only enough sacred oil for one day's burning.

Other Celebrations

December 6, **F**east of **S**t **N**icholas – Born into a wealthy family. Imprisoned during the persecution of Diocletian. Best known as Bishop of Myra and devoted himself to helping the poor.

December 8, **F**east of the **I**mmaculate **C**onception of the **B**lessed **V**irgin **M**ary – celebrated nine months before the feast of her birth (September 8), and recalls the Christian belief that Mary was preserved free from all stain of original sin from the moment of her conception by her mother, Ann. Because of her unique role as the mother of Jesus Christ, God endowed her with special graces and gifts. Like a new Eve, she brought new life to the world through her Divine Son. Today's feast is also a reminder that the whole Church shares in Mary's privileges in some way. For this reason the feastday prayer asks God to “trace in our actions the lines of her love, in our hearts her readiness of faith.”

Mass Schedule for the Feast day is: 9am and 6pm



BULLETIN REFLECTION

by Father Rody

DEC. 05, 2021...2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT...LK. 3, 1-6

2...the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert.

3 He went throughout [the] whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming...

3 points to reflect from...

=1. John the son of Zechariah

The historical John the Baptist is no longer around. BUT BUT BUT in the modern time everybody is called by God to be John the Baptist. This is grounded on the very sacrament we received specifically 'Baptism'...

CCC 1213 Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (vitae spiritualis ianua),4 and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; *we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission:*

CCC 1241 The anointing with sacred chrism, perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop, signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized, who has become a Christian, that is, one "anointed" by the Holy Spirit, incorporated into Christ who is anointed priest, prophet, and king.

=2. Proclaiming

This is the mandate given to us by virtue of **CCC 1213** (sharers in her mission) & **1241** (as prophet). Also, on the accounts of the evangelists;

MK 16,15 He said to them, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.

MT 28,18 Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

LK 24, 47 and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

JN 20, 21 [Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

=3. The Word of God

What should be the content of our proclamation? It is the Word of God. Let me repeat it, the Word of God. Not my word/interpretation...not your word/interpretation...BUT Word of God.

On matter of interpretation, how are we to approach it?

VAT. II... Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the modern world) #4. *To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.*

Now by way of application...*Did Jesus Christ say, 'mankind when you pray or celebrate the Word of God put a limit...30 minutes would do?'* Early Church History states, after the death of our Lord Jesus Christ...they celebrated the Word of God at the catacombs and THEY DID NOT SAY TO THEMSELVES HEY LET'S HURRY UP BECAUSE THE ROMAN SOLDIERS MIGHT CATCH US...HEY WE SHOULD DO THIS ONLY FOR FEW MINUTES...HEY IT'S DARK ALREADY IT'S TIME TO SLEEP...HEY I HAVE NOT YET COOKED OUR DINNER...HEY I STILL HAVE SCHEDULE TO CATCH UP...THEY ALL SET ASIDE THOSE WORLDLY PERSONAL PRIORITIES AND THEY GAVE MORE IMPORTANCE TO THE WORD OF GOD.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (**MT 6,33**)

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (**COL 3, 2**)