

## Second Sunday of Advent A2022

Last week with the first Sunday of Advent, I talked about God's dream of gathering all the peoples of the earth to the mountain of his house where they will live in peace and harmony. In today's readings God promises a Messiah who will fulfill that dream of gathering all the people of the earth, including the gentiles, and govern them with justice and right judgment.

Isaiah tells us that the Messiah will come from the descendants of David, from the stump of Jesse. He will be filled with the Spirit of the Lord. He will judge with fairness and decides with righteousness. Under his watch true peace will reign not only between human beings with one another, but also in the cosmic world.

As the prophet says, at that time "the wolf will be a guest of the lamb; the leopard will lie down with the kids; the calf and the young lion will browse together with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear will be neighbors while the lion will eat hay. The baby will play by the cobra's den whereas the child will lay his hand on the viper's dugout". There will be a time of peace on the holy mountain, where the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God.

This is the promise that nourished the collective memory of the people of Israel over the meander of their history. In the ups and downs of life, in sorrows and in joys, they never overlooked God's promise of sending them a Messiah. God's promise was their support in difficult times and their motivation in desperate situations.

That is why St Paul says, "Whatever was written previously was written for our instruction, that by our endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope". But this is not hope for nothing. It is hope for Jesus Christ in whom God has fulfilled that promise made once to the patriarchs.

This time of Advent is a period of longing that Jesus comes again to set us free from the bondage of sin. Thus, we understand the strength of the words of John the Baptist addressed to his countrymen, inviting them to repentance.

To better understand the appeal of John, we need to know that Jerusalem was a city surrounded by desert. When someone important had to come to the city, it was necessary to go out into the desert to make a visible road, to fill the holes, to flat the obstacles and to repair the bridges. This is what inspired John the Baptist's message on the coming of the Messiah. Someone who was mightier than him was about to come, someone whose sandals he was unworthy to untie.

As it can be seen, John uses a metaphor to apply it to reality. This path he is talking about is not made on land but in the heart of every man; it is not built in the desert but in one's life. To build it, there is no need to engage in material labor but in works of conversion. Man is like a city invaded by the desert; he is closed in on himself, in his egoism; he is like a house with mold and a roof with leak. It needs a repair in order to survive.

Like the people of Israel, we too have to repent from our sins. We have to live up to the high standards of life. Like the people of Israel, we have to prepare the way in our hearts for the Lord. We have to make straight his paths so that whenever he comes, wherever he comes, however he comes, he might find us prepared and ready.

One of the points on which our conversion is needed today is charity. The Eucharist is the sacrament of charity par excellence. It shows Jesus' love for us as he gave his life on the cross for our salvation. We have to imitate him because charity is the essence of holiness.

We have to continually accept to purify ourselves through the sacrament of confession in order to reconcile with God and our fellows. We have to fight anything in our life that is an obstacle in the flourishing of our relationship with Jesus. We have to let ourselves be transformed by the word of Jesus and change our minds, our conduct, and our lives accordingly.

It serves no purpose to claim the privilege of our family or our family background like the Jews who believed that simply because they were descendants of Abraham, they had a guaranty for salvation. No, that is not enough; though it can sometimes work in politics; it cannot, however, work for our relationship with Jesus. We cannot live on the spiritual capital or heritage of our family.

This is the time of personal choice and decision. We cannot claim salvation for the sake of a heroic past of our folks. It is like a criminal who claims his innocence on the merits of his honest father or mother.

That is why on this second Sunday of Advent, John invites us to repentance. One of the things from which we have to repent is also our pride, this vice that pushes us to esteem ourselves better than others. John himself gives us an example of humility as he recognizes that the one who comes after him is bigger than himself. We have to humble ourselves and recognize who we truly are as simple human beings, frail, weak and sinners. Whatever might be our social standard, we are just simple human beings like any other, and not gods.

Without repentance, there is no way of enjoying God's forgiveness and salvation. A true repentance does not lie merely in a sentimental sorrow, but in a real change of life. After all, a true repentance should produce fruit as evidence of the change we have undergone. That is the demand of this second Sunday and for which we have to strive. Let us ask the Lord to help us through the grace of his Holy Spirit to take advantage of this wonderful time to come close to him and to repent of our sins. God bless you all!

### **Isaiah 11: 1-10; Romans 15: 4-9; Mathew 3: 1-12**



Homily Date: December 04, 2022  
© 2022 – Fr Felicien I. Mbala, PhD, STD  
Contact: [www.mbala.org](http://www.mbala.org)  
Document Name: 20221204homily