

Homily by Fr. Anthony Davis

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.”

December 6, 2020

2nd Sunday of Advent (Yr B)

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8

So much of our life is spent in preparation of one event or another. God and nature began to prepare us for life in this world from the moment of conception. As we grew, we were taught how to adequately prepare ourselves for the various events, and stages of life. I remember getting ready for school the first day, and preparing for my First Communion, Confirmation, and Ordination after going through a rigorous preparation/training of 14 years in the Seminary.

Indeed, I am sure you can resonate with me on how making preparations for something, is such a big part of anyone's life, including family gatherings. Think of what embarrassment or even a disaster we run into when we are caught unprepared. And so today, the Prophet Isaiah cries out: “In the desert prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight His path!” Hence the Prophet says prepare, John the Baptist in the Gospel, says prepare. And our Advent season says prepare!!

Prepare for what/who? We are about to celebrate the greatest event in the history of the world-the Son of God taking on our own human nature, in order to reveal his love for us, heal us, teach us, free us from sin and shame, and eventually, share with us everlasting life (Salvation).

How do we prepare? In short, “In the desert, prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight his path. And all flesh shall see the salvation of the Lord”. How do I mean? The desert is a persistent reality in the geography of the Biblical World. And it is a persistent for the Jews and Christians alike. If you've visited a desert or live in the desert regions our country, you would know its qualities; i.e. silence, sometimes interrupted by the sounds of rattling snakes or hissing insects, sudden sand/rainstorms, hot days and cold nights; a certain bleakness and barrenness etc. But we also know that the desert, if we stick with it, has its own beauty and serenity. There is nothing like discovering an outcropping of small colorful spring flowers in the midst of the tan landscape, or finding a stream that seems to enliven the whole rocky scene, or the vastness of the horizon and the magnificence of the starry nights.

Advent provides us the opportunity to hear the Good News from whatever desert we find ourselves in. We are encouraged to recognize the desert experiences in our own lives: the losses we cannot let go of, the times when we have lingered in hurt/pain, rather than accepting

or offering forgiveness; the spiritually dry spells when we wonder about God's care for us. There is still a voice crying out in the wilderness, inviting us to prepare our hearts for the one who is to come. This means we are to level the hills of our sins and fill in the valleys of our failures and omissions. We are to make smooth the rough ways of our incivility and our lack of graciousness towards others. We are to create the most important road of all- 'A HIGHWAY FOR OUR GOD'. It is the only highway that matters in the long run, the road by which God can come straight into our open-gated hearts at Christmas and at eternal life's end. Then "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all mankind shall see it".

This Advent season is a time to renew our commitment to listening to the voice that gives meaning to the desert; the voice that reminds us that nothing is ever completely lost, even in this time of pandemic and distress. Therefore, this is our opportunity to live with devotion and prayer, so that we will be prepared not just for a memorial of the first Christmas, but also in joyful hope, for the coming of Jesus again in glory. In a nutshell, "DON'T JUST PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS, PREPARE FOR CHRIST". AMEN.