

## Second Sunday of Advent - Year B - December 7, 2014

You may remember last week when I vented about my dislike for waiting, my frustration at not having whatever I want right now. Perhaps, some of you share that view and become annoyed with waiting. If you think Amazon Prime with free two-day shipping and one-day shipping for just \$3.99 is the greatest thing since sliced bread, then you share the same no-wait space. But, the fact remains, Advent is about waiting. But Advent waiting should be fruitful and not be a mindless activity

John the Baptist warns us to get ready. His words are more than just an exhortation. Rather, he is warning us. But what is he warning us about?

John invites us to return to the basics. What really revs our engines? What priorities push our lives? In the realm of priorities, does Jesus motivate us? Does our faith guide our actions? Do the strategic teachings of the Church illuminate our moral life?

Our faith, our Jesus, our Church have been victimized over the past years. Contrary voices present themselves in very glib ways presenting contradictory views as very appealing. Rhetoric has replaced reason in such a way that objective norms and fundamental beliefs have lost esteem.

John says to his listeners, while quoting Isaiah, that if our lives are not what they should be, then do something about it. Translated to us, it means that, if Jesus, faith, the Church, no longer motivate our everyday lives, then we need to refocus. John exhorts his listeners to return to the basics. So, too, ourselves, we must focus on the basics: Jesus, our faith, our Church.

So, here's the translation of what John is saying. If we have placed our work ahead of our families, then today's readings invite us to correct this situation. If we have placed success ahead of our personal relationship with God, then today's readings invite us to change this. If my personal comfort has replaced our obligation to aid those in need, corrective action is needed. If personal pleasure, social or recreational activities have replaced our responsibilities to worship God, then an inversion of activity is needed.

What should we do if we are not prepared for death or for the second coming of Jesus? What if we realize that our lives are not being lived as

they should, then just as the people did in John's time, we need to repent. One of God's greatest attributes is his love for us; His love is so immense that that he seeks us out and wants to forgive us and be merciful towards us.

However, we will never seek forgiveness unless and until we take an honest inventory of our lives. Taking inventory means that we take a very honest look into our lives, not as we sometimes pretend, but rather compare them to what we know about our faith, about our Savior, and about our Church's teachings. Whatever keeps us from making a good match needs to be removed. God's forgiveness is always available to us especially in the Sacrament of Penance. All of us need some conversion in our lives. Advent is a great time to do it.

The great saints of history have told us that they lost control of their lives because of sin. We like to be in control. Control of our lives begins with the forgiveness of our sins. Use this season to re-evaluate honestly. When we celebrate the birth of Christ, we are celebrating what he did for us. He came for one reason: to save us from our sins, to save us from ourselves. When we say rejoice, we should rejoice in what the Lord has done for us. Our Advent "waiting" gives us time to straighten our priorities. In the words of Isaiah: "make straight the way of the Lord." In our words, make straight the path to the Lord.