

Homily for the 2nd Sunday of Advent

Strange as it may seem, I love the Gospel we have just heard. It is a litany of names and places that don't mean a thing to us. But they meant a great deal to Luke. For Luke, in writing his Gospel, wanted to point out that the Word of God was spoken in a particular time, in a particular place and to a particular group of people. Luke wants us to know that the proclamation of the Gospel is not an elaborate hoax, it is not a tale of great imagination. Rather, it really and truly happened. And so carefully, very carefully, Luke, without any hesitation, pinpoints the coming of the Word of God into a particular time and place. It isn't a generalization. It all happened when the people named were in power.

And that Word of God was spoken through John the Baptist. John had a mission to complete. And his mission is now our mission – to prepare for the coming of Christ who will be born into a world that doesn't look so terribly different from the one described by Luke some 2000 years ago.

And John's prescription of preparation is very exacting. He tells us to **fill up the valleys**.....fill up those hollow moments in our lives that have been deepened by what we haven't done: kind words left unspoken, compassionate deeds left undone, bread not shared, prayers

neglected, overtures of love denied. How many times is our sinfulness not in what we do but in what we don't do?

Quoting Isaiah, John tells us **to level the hills and the mountains**...hills of pride and self-centeredness, of arrogance and ambition, hills made high by an unwillingness to yield to the quieter and more humble ways of Christ.

And John tells us **to make the winding ways straight and the rough ways smooth**. John bids us to examine and eradicate anger, impatience, intolerance, prejudice, racism and our endless judgments of others. John tells us to live differently because Christ is coming.

As we prepare for this year's celebration of Christmas, the mantle of the prophet John the Baptist is placed on our shoulders and made our responsibility for it is the year 2012, Barack is President of our country, Lincoln is Governor of our state and Alan is Mayor of our city. We are in the high priesthood of Benedict XVI and Thomas is Bishop of Providence and once again the Word of God is spoken to each one of us....Prepare the Way of the Lord.