

DECEMBER 6, 2020 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Dear Parishioners:

Jesus prepared 30 years for 3 years of public life. Preparation is so important.

The people of the Old Testament listened to John the Baptist's sermon and prepared to receive the Messiah through baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. We also participated in the preparation, accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah, got baptized, and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit from Jesus. In other words, each of us became a temple of the Holy Spirit, i.e. a dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, and received the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We are New Testament people. Now, we must prepare to meet Jesus, who will come again at the end of the world.

The apostle Peter explains well in the second reading today how we should prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus. He says, "we must conduct ourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God." There are three ways in conducting oneself in holiness and devotion: humility, poverty, and purity.

Humility. The seeming delay of the Lord's Second Coming is that he is patient with us, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. Here our humility is demanded. We should not think that the apparent delay of the Lord's return is for those around me. Instead of thinking 'He is not yet coming because of that person. Oh, that sinner would better repent quickly,' we should say, "He is being late for my repentance." This is humility. Everyone thought great of John the Baptist, but he humbly said, "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals."

Even if we are faithful, do a lot of services and good deeds, and pray hard, it would not be humble for us to say, "I do not need repentance." We need to earnestly pray for the conversion of sinners, but at the same time, we must include ourselves in those sinners as well. We may be considered a better Christian than others, even then we must have humility to think that the Lord is slow to come patiently waiting for me to repent. Since we have received many gifts of grace through the baptism of the Holy Spirit by Jesus, and continue to receive grace and blessings through the sacraments and prayers, it is a sin not to bear as much fruits as the graces and blessings that we have

received. Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more (Luke 12:48). Humility it is the foundation for a holy and devout life, acknowledging that a lot less is given back to the Lord than what we have received from Him.

Poverty. John the Baptist was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. To have poverty here means not to be attached to worldly possessions. In other words, even a rich man has a virtue of poverty if he is without that attachment. On the other hand, if even a poor person is attached to things of the world, he does not have a virtue of poverty. It is said that when the day of God comes, the heavens will be dissolved in flames and the elements melted by fire. What good is it to be attached to things that would disappear? Shouldn't we rather focus on the things eternal? True poverty makes us approach with a greater desire to holy things.

Purity. "Be eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace." We have learnt from the Beatitude: Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Although we live in the world, we should not be of the world. Purity means that we have undivided hearts toward God without having parts of our hearts for the world. We must always be careful not to let world spots or blemishes stain even our thoughts as well as our words and actions. This is what a devout person would do.

The Talmud, the book of Jewish law, says, "The truth has its power when it comes out of the mouth of a self-denying man." John the Baptist was a man who radically denied himself. So, the truth he proclaimed was powerful, and people went out to the wilderness where he was in order to hear his sermons. Humility is to deny the self that asserts its will and thoughts, poverty is to deny the greedy self by breaking off attachments and sharing with others, and chastity is to deny the self that is seeking worldly or carnal pleasures.

We have never met Jesus in person, so we do not know what He looks like. Still, we are waiting for His return. It takes faith for us to patiently await Him whom we have not personally met. We can do this because we daily feel the warm touches of Jesus and His bosom, which the prophet Isaiah said, "Like a shepherd he feeds his flock; in his arms he gathers the lambs, carrying them in his bosom, and leading the ewes with care." This is proof that we are people of faith. Let us pray together, "Come Lord, Jesus. Help us to wait for you

preparing ourselves in the life of humility, poverty, and purity because we long to see You face to face. Amen.”

Fr. Don Bosco Park