

Second Sunday of Advent, December 5

Bar 5:1-9; Phil 1:4-6,8-11; Lk 3:1-6

For over two years, I have been preparing for each day and working to find more joy in my life, by praying the Rosary. During the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, a few of my elderly neighbors and a friend with special needs joined me for these prayers each morning. The time we spend together in fellowship and prayer, has brought me joy, and has helped prepare the way for my days. Interestingly, the experience with the Holy Rosary has also brought me into the Catholic family as part of the RCIA program at Holy Name.

The words “prepare”, and “joy” are constantly on my mind during this season of Advent. In fact, “prepare” is the meaning behind the season and “joy” is the gift we receive!

On this, second Sunday, during the holy time of Advent, the word “prepare” leaps off the pages of scripture and especially in Saint Luke’s Gospel. According to teaching, John the Baptist is preparing the way of Jesus and working to prepare the masses to receive Him. His message reflects that of the Prophet Isaiah as foretold years prior and helps those around him better understand his meaning. Saint John tells of the amazing power of the coming of Christ. He is instructing his followers to get ready, to prepare for something earth changing, and completely amazing.

Saint John’s devotion and dedication to preparing the way for Christ Jesus is remarkable. In fact, his entire life was a preparation and a devotion to Him. His mission was all for Jesus. I find it so fitting that his connection and preparation for our Lord, described in scripture when Jesus’ mother, Mary, assists his mother Elizabeth. Mary came to help Elizabeth prepare for the birth of Saint John. Was Mary’s selfless devotion and dedication to Elizabeth, and thus the coming of John, a beautiful precursor to Saint John’s preparation for Jesus’ arrival, preaching and baptism? Yes, of course. There is joy in preparation!

The Advent readings today are reaching out for us to prepare the way – the way of our hearts, our lives, and our futures – for Christ Jesus. It is John who prepares and tells us how amazing and powerful this Son of God will be in our lives.

That preparation is what brings us to “joy” ... the joy of Jesus in our daily lives, maybe in our morning prayers, through the Rosary, or in conversations with neighbors and friends. Jesus is earth changing and completely amazing when we remember He is a gift that unites our world. God reminds us of this each Christmas season... each Advent. Like Saint John, God is preparing our way so we can receive and share the joy of Jesus!

Merry Christmas,

Holy Name Parishioner and RCIA Candidate Nick Sauer