**2nd Sunday of Advent**

Rev. Francis D. Kim

We have dreams for Christmas. Some dream of a white Christmas. Others dream about something special gifts they hope to find under the tree on Christmas morning. Still, others dream of spending Christmas with the beloved. So, Advent is a time for dreaming.

Whatever our dream, Advent is also a time to recall God’s dream for us. God dreamed of restoring the lost and broken hearts. He dreamed of saving the world. So, He gave His only begotten Son to save us. Christ came into the world and made it a better place. It was God’s dream.

God’s dream is not just about some distant future. It is a dream that God wishes to implant in us so that, making the dream our own, we would live, love, and work in such a way as to make that dream a reality right here, today!

So, we hear once again the voice of John the Baptist in the Gospel. John is a great sign, who pointed to Jesus and prepared the way for His coming. The Church places John the Baptist center stage on the second Sunday of Advent because he is the very voice of Advent, the voice that points to the coming of Jesus to transform our life. His message to all of us is ‘to prepare.’ He cries out in the desert to us, “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.”

He shows us how to prepare the way of the Lord. This preparation is not found at the shopping mall or gift shop. It is the much much deeper preparation of our life and soul for Christ.

He tells us that the first step for preparation is repentance, turning our hearts and minds away from sin, indifference, and unbelief, to a sincere trust in God.

John calls us to go to the desert where is apart from the noise and distractions of daily life. In this time of year, there are too much noise and distractions. We need to move away from disorder to keep silence and to prepare the way of the Lord. It is time to make a space in each day to be with the Lord and to renew our faith.

Many people want a Christmas without Advent, happiness without sacrifice, joy without effort, peace without dedication, or salvation without conversion of life. It would be wonderful if the joy and peace of Christmas came with putting up decorations, turning on a Christmas CD, and stringing out the lights. Plug it all in and Christmas happens. But, Christmas that happens so easily disappears just as easily.

In the middle of this crowded season, let’s make room for John the Baptist and his message of repentance. He reminds us that we should be getting ready not just for another holiday season, but to renew our lives in the power of Christ.

John reminds us that we need to change. He calls us again this year in this crowded Christmas season to take away one or two stones or boulders that block the full flow of grace into our life. He prepares us not for temporary seasonal cheer, but for deep joy in the Lord that comes from experiencing release from sin and new life in Christ. With John the Baptist, Christmas will be not just a holiday season, but a healing season as well.

Now, it’s the second Sunday of Advent. The birth of Jesus is getting closer and closer. Before too late, we have to prepare the way of the Lord in our lives.

On Christmas morning, let us rejoice that we did look at our lives and did some repenting to make smooth the rough ways in our lives. Rejoice that we did get rid of our stuff to make straight His way. Rejoice that we did wipe out anger and greed to make straighten the winding roads.

Then, we will have great happiness and joy when Christ is coming in our hearts on Christmas day.