Homily for the 2nd Sunday in Advent 2025 Year A

Today is the second Sunday of Advent, that special season in the life of the Church when we prepare for the celebration of Christmas, God coming as Man to man.

The Gospel today introduces us to the figure of John the Baptist, a great prophet and the chosen messenger whose role it was to prepare the way for God's coming to man.

The brief descriptions that we have of John the Baptist show him to be an extraordinary character. He came out of the solitude of the desert and captured the imagination of the people. They flocked to hear him announcing that the long-awaited day of salvation was about to dawn upon them.

He didn't mince his words. They stung like the lash of the whip as he reprimanded his listeners for their loose lifestyles which were making them careless and apathetic.

They were not ready for this Advent, this Coming. His message was simple but powerful, “Do penance, reform your life by prayer and fasting, for the Kingdom of God is at hand”.

That same voice of John the Baptist speaks to us across the ages and urges us in a similar way to prepare a place for the Lord in our hearts.

Advent therefore is an invitation to Conversion and John gives some very down-to-earth advice on how to change our lives for the better.

Linked to the themes of the prophet Isaiah, he spoke of filling in valleys. What valleys? Perhaps the valleys of prejudice.

He spoke of levelling down mountains. What mountains? Perhaps the mountains of pride.

He spoke of straightening out crooked paths. What crooked paths? Perhaps the crooked paths of injustice.

Let us ask ourselves today in the privacy of our own hearts, what perhaps is there in my life that needs a radical change or complete turning around to allow God to come closer to me.

In all of our lives there are perhaps these little dark areas or corners of ourselves which do not want to be disturbed, even though we are aware that they prevent God from entering our innermost being.

Advent is therefore the Church's gift to us, the opportunity when, through prayer and penance, we can make a fresh start to prevent our spiritual drift.

How do we go about it?

Well for a start we have to realise that it is a time consuming and costly business. It demands listening to what God is saying to us and, if necessary, acting upon it by making changes to our way of life.

Welcoming God involves removing all those blockages, twist, turns and obstacles which prevent him coming closer to us.

Preparing a way for the Lord may mean walking a new path and putting the old ways behind us. Christ cannot come to us and save us, without our co-operation and our will. Like a true gentleman, he does not force entry into our lives but waits to be invited.

The figure of John the Baptist also reminds us that we too have the task of announcing Christ to others. We do not have to shout it from the rooftops, we can do it instead by the quiet example of our lives.

We may be the only book about Christ which most people will ever read. It is those quiet lives of kindness, honesty, and faithfulness whereby we show that Christ is right there with us.