

Homily 2nd Sunday Advent Year B 2020

During life we often have the impression that something is missing, something is not quite right but cannot always put a finger on it. We are dissatisfied with ourselves believing we can do the good things better, that we can be more selfless, that we can show more love, but do not quite make it. We also have a deep inner yearning, a longing for something more for ourselves, from ourselves but also for God and from God. We are all created with an inner space which only God can fill, some call it the soul; in baptism we call it a temple - it is God's space. In Advent our focus is drawn towards the manger which is also waiting for a special presence. The manger has its arms open and ready to welcome Jesus at his birth. Advent is a time to focus on our inner space and prepare it to welcome the Christ who is born each year, not just in a manger in Bethlehem but in the manger of our hearts. John the Baptist spoke to the hearts of a people yearning for a Messiah, a Saviour, a Prince of Peace. He turned out to be not just the promised Messiah, the promised Saviour, but, as Mark writes, the *Son of God* (in Hebrew the phrase "son of so-and-so" means "having the qualities of so-and-so", in this case divinity). This is why many responded to his call and were baptised. John recognised that he was only preparing the way for Jesus and challenges us to do the same. In preparing ourselves for Christ's birth, we can inspire others to join in that preparation. Like John we only need to prepare the ground. Jesus will do the rest. We will awaken people in so far as we awaken ourselves. The letter of Peter calls for patience because patience is the fertile ground that gives birth to something new. The more we focus on the coming of Christ the less room there will be for negativity, selfishness, unkindness, or impassivity. Jesus' birth is not to be missed.

Advent, this powerful liturgical season invites us to pause in silence to understand a presence. It is an invitation to understand that the individual events of the day are hints that God is giving us, signs of the attention he has for each one of us. Pope Benedict XVI

The Lord is coming, always coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord. Henri Nouwen

A kindergarten teacher told the children that "Whales are the largest animals but they can't swallow people, because their throats are too small."

Little girl: "But in the Bible, it says that Jonah was swallowed by a whale."

Teacher: "You can't always believe what you read."

Little Girl: "Well, when I go to heaven, I'll ask Jonah."

Teacher: "And what if Jonah didn't go to heaven?"

Little girl: "Then **you** can ask him."