

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES
December 10, 2017
The Second Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 + 2 Peter 3:8-14 + Mark 1:1-8



Reflection by: Sister Ann Marie Rimmer, OP

It's All in the Preparation

We Christians are so blessed with our Scriptures. The stories and the images we ponder in Scripture enrich our prayer and imaginations. "Prepare the way of the Lord" Isaiah tells us. Wonders will manifest God's presence. Isaiah paints a world where the lowly will be raised up, deserts will become fertile. Our God is like a shepherd, gathering us up in his arms. Get ready, God is coming!

How are we to get ready? How are we to prepare? "Repent and be without blemish when our God comes," says Peter in his letter.

John the Baptist explains "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Advent brings with it an invitation to grace. What grace are we being invited to embrace? How are we called during these weeks before we celebrate in history and mystery the birth of Jesus? How do we prepare?

Perhaps the answer is to make more room in our lives to spend time pondering the Scripture and connecting on a deep level to Jesus and our neighbor. Peter tells us to "conduct ourselves in holiness and devotion, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, the Second Coming. We can do this by preparing, planning some structured time in prayer and reaching out to a neighbor in need. It's true; it is all in the preparation. Whether we are going to a meeting, cooking a great meal, planning a trip, the better we prepare, the better the outcome.

So, in these busy days before Christmas, make some time in your schedule to ponder and pray to our Shepherd God who gathers us in his arms and holds us close to his bosom.

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Reflection by: Sister Patricia Wormann, O.P.

Our Advent words for last week were “Watch” and “Be Alert.” Our word for this week is “Prepare.” Of course, we’re preparing: cleaning, shopping, decorating, cooking, baking, sending cards. We’re very busy—lots to do before the great feast of Christmas, the feast of the Incarnation.

But what about our hearts? Our lives?

Isaiah invites us to make a path for the coming of our God. John the Baptist shouts in the desert “Prepare the way of the Lord”—the One whose sandal straps he is not worthy even to loosen. And in the Second Letter of Peter we are reminded that the time is short; God comes when we least expect!

God is always coming into our lives, in unexpected places and at inconvenient times. It is in the quiet, “wasted” time of just being that we prepare to welcome God’s coming:

In the request for a favor

In the crying of a child

In the unexpected delays

In the needs of our brothers and sisters

In our overwhelming awareness of the devastation of so many lives/situations in our world: fire, violence, war, abuse, displacement and destruction

Have we, are we, prepared to be the “heralds of Good News” and comfort God’s people? Will we open new doors to peace, freedom and joy? Take time. Notice what’s happening within and about you. Nourish love and joy. Move out of all that keeps you from seeing, hearing, expecting and being surprised. Prepare the Way of the Lord!!!

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