

2nd Sunday of Advent (Year A)  
(Isaiah 11:1-10 / Matthew 3:1-12)  
07.12.25

Dear brothers and sisters,

Our companion on this Second Sunday of Advent is Saint John the Baptist.

John the Baptist is a prophet. He is the one foretold by the prophet Isaiah when he said: “He is a voice who cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight”. John invites us “to repent because the kingdom of heaven is close at hand”. John the Baptist exhorts us to prepare our hearts and minds to welcome Jesus not only in the coming days at Christmas when we shall remember his first coming into the world in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, but also every day of our lives, because the Lord has promised us to be with us always, yes, even to the end of time. And we believe that he is faithful to his promises. Jesus is a loving and saving presence always walking by our side, his hand placed upon our shoulder. He is with us on the path of our lives. Jesus is the Son of God, God’s Word made flesh, the Lord, the Messiah foretold and awaited by the prophets.

It is interesting to notice that John does not preach in Jerusalem or in the Temple where religious people gather. John does not speak in the market square where anybody could hear him. John speaks “in the wilderness”! This is paradoxical! There is a reason for it. If we want to listen to God’s Word, we need silence and solitude. Obviously, God can speak to us everywhere and he does so. But most of the time he speaks to us in silence and solitude. We remember the meeting of God with Elijah in the first book of kings: Elijah recognizes God’s voice, not in the hurricane or the storm, not in the earthquake or the fire, but “in a light murmuring sound”. God likes to converse intimately not only with his prophets, but also with all his children, with each one of us quietly. In the silence of the desert, we can hear God’s call to repent, to change, to be converted. We can prepare our hearts and minds to welcome God made flesh in Jesus at Christmas and in our daily lives.

To go into the wilderness, to experience solitude and silence, we don’t need to travel abroad, to far-off lands. We can create our desert space where we are, by limiting our time in front of the screen of our TV, our laptop or our I-Phone. We can create our own desert by fighting against the multiple addictions which hold us captive and make us unable to listen to the Lord. We lose so much time and energy which could be used to listen to the Lord and to listen to our neighbours with whom the Lord identifies himself. We lose so much time during which we could serve those in need with whom the Lord also identifies himself.

It is also interesting to notice how the dress and the diet of John the Baptist were quite particular. “John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey”. His dress and diet expressed more than a desire to live an ascetic life, a life of penance. They represented the life style of a man who was at home in the desert and fed on the natural products of an uncultivated land. By his manner of dress and the way he nourished himself, John wanted to bring the people of Israel of his time back into the wilderness where their ancestors had sojourned for forty years, from the time of their liberation from slavery in

Egypt until their entrance in the Promised Land given to us by the Lord as an inheritance. The new liberation of Israel must begin again, where it began before, in the wilderness. John the Baptist calls the people to return symbolically to the point of departure, before they crossed the river. Like the first generation of the desert, today as well the people must listen to God, purify themselves in the Jordan's waters, and there renewed, come back to the land of peace and salvation.

John the Baptist invites us to convert ourselves to God, to return to Jesus, to open up paths that lead to him in the world and in the Church. The call to conversion is not just a call addressed to us personally, full stop.

It is a call to conversion addressed to the whole Church and to each one of us as members of the Church.

It is a call to put compassion at the heart of the Church and in the hearts of all her members when they see those who suffer. We are called to be merciful rather than indifferent, to be actively engaged in helping others rather than passive, to be generous rather than selfish.

The call addressed to us is a call to move from a pyramidal vision of the Church where you have the Pope, the bishops, the clergy, that is to say the hierarchy telling to the laity what to think and what to do, to a Synodal Church wherein all the baptised are invited to converse in the Spirit, to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Church today.

The call addressed to us is a call to live for God's kingdom and his righteousness, and not for our own kingdom, and our own will. Our prayer should always be: "Your will be done" and not 'my will be done'!

It is a call to place the poor at the centre of the Church and at the centre of our hearts; this is the preferential love for the poor which is at the heart of the Gospel and which was so dear to Pope Francis.

It is a call to be and to remain in a continual state of conversion to Christ and his gospel.

Let us wait for the Lord who will come back at the end of time to take us with him and lead us into the kingdom of his Father. Let us prepare our hearts to welcome the Lord who is already coming to visit us day after day.