



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – DECEMBER 4, 2022

Fr. Bob Kabat

Scripture: Isaiah 11:1-10 Romans 15:4-9 Matthew 3:1-12

After last week's homily centered around the Beatles song, "When I'm Sixty-Four", a prominent member of our parish requested the song "I am a Walrus" by The Beatles for this week, but it won't fit with the message. So, I will have to pass. Instead let's look at Advent.

The Advent season can be very frustrating to Christians. The malls and the media are celebrating Christmas already. Right? They are singing Jingle Bells, Deck the Halls, even Silent Night. Even many of us have Christmas trees and decorations up already and we are making plans for Christmas. It's like we skip Advent, the time of waiting.

We come to church today and we hear nothing about Christmas, nothing about Bethlehem, nothing about Mary, Joseph or the manger. Instead we hear of John the Baptist, a voice crying in the desert. He is calling to us to repent. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." I mean really?!

We expect to hear of the joy of this season. Instead we hear of judgment of our sins. We look for the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, but we find John the Baptist wearing camel's hair.

Crazy times?

Advent is widely misunderstood. Advent is about waiting for the THREE coming of the Lord. His first coming at Bethlehem centuries ago has

already happened, which is the Christmas that we remember; His second coming at the end of time, which we looked at a bit last weekend as we sang "When I'm Sixty-Four"; and between these two, his coming into our lives each day, especially today by His Word, the Eucharist and each other. All three comings of the Lord are the focus of Advent. That's why we meet John the Baptist today.

Between Jesus' first coming at Bethlehem and his second coming at the end of time, Christ comes into our lives each day by His grace. He comes into our personal lives during Advent not only in the joy of family gatherings and liturgical celebrations, but I would say in the struggles of our daily trials, our sickness, those in need. Too often we miss the Lord when he comes in such disguise.

The gospel story of the first Christmas offers an image which can be helpful for us. Remember when Joseph and Mary, who is pregnant with Jesus, came to Bethlehem, they could not find any room in the inn and basically had to live in a stable with animals.

Advent reminds us that we are the innkeepers of our own hearts. When the Lord comes unexpectedly into our lives in this season, He might find again that there is "no room in the inn."

This Wednesday is an invitation to possibly make room in the inn with the Sacrament of Reconciliation here at the parish starting at 6:45 in the evening. We also have Nights of Mercy on the 15th and the 20th. Advent is a time to take a look in the mirror and make room for the Lord. A time to repent, as John the Baptist reminds us today.

I invite us to listen to John the Baptist, who proclaimed the coming of Jesus to the people of his time. He does the same for us by asking us to repent – to make room for the Lord in our lives, no matter our age.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths, still applies today. It is a message for all of us.

Enjoy the Second Week of Advent.

Pray the prayer COME, PEACEABLE KINGDOM