

Bar. 5:1-9;  
Ps. 125;  
Phil. 1:4-6, 8-11;  
Lk. 3:1-6

# MAKE STRAIGHT HIS PATHS

To believe despite all evidence to the contrary: this too is Advent. So says John the Baptist—the prototype of the loser who entrusts his cause to a God he can't see; a God who doesn't free him from prison or come to his aid when he has problems. John, the simpleton who commits his life to a

God who seems to have forgotten his prophet and is apparently looking elsewhere when he is in need. Just like the Baptist's friends who, shaking with fright, come to collect his body after he is decapitated....

John, God's madman, the forerunner of the "rising Sun," Christ the Lord. John, who carried out an impossible mission, knowing very well that preaching to the crowds to change their hearts would not change the world. From the human point of view, it only changed his own dismal destiny. It was the Divine Master, the Sun he foretold—God himself—who would change the destiny of the world by his humble birth and humiliating death.

John, the lion-hearted—who was not politically-motivated, who didn't give anyone a "discount," not even Herod, the "boss" at that time. John the naïf. And yet today's Liturgy prepares us for Christmas through his preaching to the crowds. He was the forerunner of many crazy people who came after him in the history of the Church: the saints—people who bet on the invisible, on a Loser—the Crucified One.

John and his plea for conversion, for a change of mentality, for the need to prepare for new times, to straighten roads, to level hills and valleys so as to speed up our journey toward the salvation offered us by God.

Yes, that's what Advent is: a preparation for new times. The Kingdom is coming. We are in the waiting stage that accompanies every human being from the first plaintive cries at birth up until one's last breath. Yes, a Christian's whole life can be called an Advent since he/she lives in expectation of the coming of Christ the Lord.

Thank you, John, for teaching us this.



## Prayer

**"A voice of one crying out in the desert:**

**"Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight his paths."**

**John, your voice is lost  
in the avalanche of voices  
that flood our busy days,  
yet it is the only voice  
that prepares us to welcome Life.  
Divine Master, give us the ability  
to perceive and heed  
only the voice that promises salvation  
to those who believe, hope and love.  
Amen.**