

Second Sunday of Advent 2016

THE WAY OF THE LORD...

(Mt. 3:1-12)

If the first light of Advent was kindled by Noah through the invitation to enter the ark of the Word, now it is John the Baptist's turn—the voice of one crying out in the desert. A voice that urges us to **prepare the way of the Lord** (cf. Mt. 3:3). But what use is it to cry out in the desert? It could be very discouraging if no one is listening.... The conviction with which John proclaimed his message was certainly not dependent on those around him. Instead, it was born, developed and matured in the desert. Indeed, his message belongs to the desert—the “place” par excellence of the Word and prophets. The desert is silent; it is the Word that speaks and penetrates hearts (cf. Hos. 2:16). Consequently, John—a person of silence and listening—was not discouraged. He let the Word itself resound around him, even when it didn't find concrete responses. The temptation to focus on results is very strong, and in the desert disillusionment could prompt us to repeat the plaintive cry of an old song: “Why should I waste time doing this?” John, instead, invites us to not give up, to not be concerned about whether or not we are successful, about whether or not everything is “OK.” Our goal is clearly very different: “Prepare the way of the Lord.” But pay attention here! Our job is simply *to prepare* the way because it does not belong to us; it belongs to God. To prepare means to make something ready to be used. In fact, the way of the Lord is already before us; the only thing we have to do is prepare ourselves to recognize and follow it.

How? **Through awareness**—an art that opens the door to reality. A wise man once said: “Those who look outward, dream. Those who look inward, wake up.” We have to wake up and listen to God in our life, in the Word and in history. When we listen courageously, awareness traces out a path in the desert of our soul. It is transformed into a profound interior spirit, which, in harmony with the rest of our personality, gives shape to our life, makes it free, authentic and ready to welcome the surprises of God: “See: I am doing something new! In the desert I am making a way...” (cf. Is. 43:19).

PRAYER

Lord of heaven and earth,
of deserts and depths,
of stars and hearts,
prepare us to welcome
the new things you are doing.
Show us your Way.
And when we are tempted
to lament that the path
is too narrow, steep and difficult,
remind us of the joyous goal
ahead of us: Jesus!
Amen.



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