

**From the Desk of Father Ed:**

Dear Parishioners,

As we continue on our four week journey through this grace filled Season of Advent our readings this weekend highlight St. John the Baptist. He was the one that Isaiah prophesied that would "Prepare the way of the Lord"... "A voice crying out in the desert". As we begin our new liturgical year we enter into cycle "B" of the Lectionary, which features Mark the Evangelist. Our gospel this weekend is from the very beginning of Mark's Gospel and points to the ministry of St. John the Baptist. "John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."

All the people from the city of Jerusalem and the surrounding areas of the countryside were going out to the desert to be baptized by John and to acknowledge their sins. John's ministry was located in the desert and not in Jerusalem or in the Temple the heart of the Jewish faith. Calling the Jewish people back into the desert to acknowledge their sinfulness reminds us of when Moses led the Israelites for 40 years through the desert. Our Lord freed them from the harsh slavery of Egypt's Pharaoh but He needed to free them from their sins of idolatry and so had to purify them in the desert. When St. John the Baptist was sent to call the people back to the desert it was to remind them that they were still in need of purification because of their sinfulness. They needed to acknowledge their sins, receive a baptism of forgiveness, and turn away from their sinful behavior to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

The Season of Advent echos the call of St. John the Baptist for us to hear, "Prepare the way of the Lord". We are invited to look within our hearts through prayer and discernment so that the Lord will help us uncover and discover our sins and faults. The voice of John the Baptist calls us to acknowledge our sins by confessing them to the Priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is a healing sacrament that opens the spiritual doors of the soul and allows us to enter more fully into this Advent Season and receive the gifts and graces the Lord wants to give us at Christmas.

**Parish Life:**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available after most weekday Masses, Saturday at 3:45 - 4:45 pm, Monday 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm, also on Mon. - Wed. Dec 18 - 20th at 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm.

Thank you for helping those in need by supporting our giving tree and for all that you do to support your parish.

Our Lady Queen of Peace, pray for us,  
Father Ed,

Pastor