

**From the Desk of Father Ed:**

Dear Parishioners,

This weekend we light our second purple candle of our Advent Wreath and we continue to move forward in the Season of Advent. Our Gospel this weekend brings us into the desert with Saint John the Baptist. "The word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert." His role was to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, the One who would save us from our sins and death. John proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins because the people were still living in sin and were not prepared for the coming of Christ.

John echoed the words of the prophet Isaiah, which were originally meant for the Jewish people anticipating their return from the Babylonian Exile. They were conquered by their enemies and exiled in a foreign land as a consequence of their sinfulness. "Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." John spoke this prophecy because it also points to the day of the Lord's coming.

He used the images of mountains and valleys, rough and winding roads being made level, smooth, and straight so that the path would be direct with nothing to hinder our Lord from being with His people. There would be no obstacle in the way of encountering Him and following Him. The only obstacle that gets in our way is sin. That is why John the Baptist brought the people out into the desert so that they would turn away from their sinful ways. Sin weakens the will and darkens the intellect and keeps us from growing in our relationship with the Lord. It prevents us from receiving all the graces that He wants to give us.

Sadly, we live in a culture that does not recognize sin. If we believe that we are not sinners then we are like the Pharisees of Jesus' time. They also saw themselves as righteous and therefore did not need a Savior. Jesus told them that He did not come to save the righteous but sinners. They eventually hated Him so much that they put Him to death. Not long after that they suffered the consequence of their sins and were conquered and destroyed by their enemies in 70 AD.

As we journey forward in our Season of Advent the heavens call out to us to turn away from sin and be prepared for the coming of the Lord.

**Parish Life:**

Thank you for your generous support of our parish giving tree and helping families in need.

Please support our food pantry by donating food for our Christmas dinner for the needy in our neighborhood.

Once again, our parish is having a one-day pilgrimage to Washington, DC for the Annual March for Life on Jan. 18th. Please make an effort to join us to give witness to the Culture of Life, which is so needed in our time. If you cannot join us please support our pilgrimage by your prayers and if possible by making a donation to help support the cost of our trip.

Our Lady Queen of Peace, pray for us,

Father Ed,

Pastor