

2nd Sunday of Advent

John the Baptist by El Greco



THE GOSPEL. Mark 1:1-8

*People of the whole Judean countryside
and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were being baptized by him.*

Now, we,
everywhere,

ache in holy hunger
waiting for
you.

Come to us all, Lord Jesus.
Turn our crooked roads
into smooth paths.
Send gentle rain
and teeming
harvests of
justice
and
healing.

Make all well, and make
each and every one a

channel of your
peace.

THE FIRST READING. Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Comfort, give comfort to my people, says your God

The world and
all of us within it cry out,
come to us, O Lord!

Like a shepherd, who gathers
the lambs and leads
them home,

hold us close now,
and make us
safe.

THE SECOND READING. 2 Peter 3:8-14

*But according to his promise we await new heavens
and a new earth.*

O God,
a thousand years
are like a day
for you.

To us one day can seem
like a thousand
years!

When
will you
come again?

Please
do not delay.
Touch our
hearts.

Be our grace

Every single
second, our grace
and our peace!

Annie Osdiek

Reflection on the Readings for the 2nd Sunday of Advent

Many of us these days find ourselves in a kind of desert space from the isolation, fear, and anxiety we are experiencing during the deadly COVID pandemic.

In today's first reading, a voice cries out in the desert, bringing hope and comfort to the shattered exiles. Some of them thought the exile was a punishment from God for their sins. But when Isaiah speaks of the "strong arm" of the Holy One, it is not raised to inflict punishment, but is one that has the strength to gather up all the lost lambs, to hold them close to God's breast, and gently lead them home. When many of us have been touch-deprived in these last months, unable even to hold the hand of a sick or dying loved one, Isaiah's image of God holding us to his breast, does, indeed, bring comfort.

In the gospel for today, John the Baptist echoes the cry of Isaiah, announcing that there is a new way out of emptiness and misery. God picks us up and wraps us round with love that comes through letting divine forgiveness wash over us and then follow Jesus.

At the end of this week, we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, (December 12), who gives us another assurance of God's tender care for the most vulnerable and deserted. Let her wrap you in her rose-filled cloak and bring with you anyone you know who feels deserted and let her speak words of comfort to you as she did to Juan Diego: "Let not your heart be disturbed. Are you not under my protection?" *Sr. Barbara Reid O.P.*

John the Baptist

by John Ferris

John the Baptist was a wild- looking man,
With his camel- hair coat and his desert tan,
His food was dried locusts dipped in wild honey,
A common food then for those without money.

He preached in the wilderness of Judea,
Multitudes came from far and near,
To hear his message of salvation,
Baptism, repentance and preparation.

Make the way straight, was his often cry,
For the One who is coming, behold it's not I,
Even His sandals, I'm not worthy to loose.
(Preaching like this can lead to abuse.)

The abuse was forthcoming from Pharisees,
Not far behind, the corrupt Sadducees,
They held the sway in religion and law,
Heaven knows what they were good for.

John accused, You guys are snakes,
Not only that, hypocrites and fakes,
You don't have at all just what it takes,
Repent or you're doomed to the fiery lakes.

God will sort out the wheat from the chaff,
He cuts out the goats with His shepherd's staff,
You say you're the seed, of Abraham,
Thinking like that got you into this jam.

The Lord can raise up the rocks and the stones,
He's in charge of the Kings and their thrones,
Your place can be taken by those who believe,
Depart now vile serpents, find someone else to deceive.

Then Jesus came down to be baptized by John,
Who replied in clear terms it was surely not on,
It was he who should be cleansed at the hand of the Lord,
Not the other way round as it seemed untoward.

But Jesus prevailed at the Jordan that day,
As he rose from the water, the Father did say,

In a Heavenly voice, as the Spirit on to Him eased,
This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased.