

Theme: CALL FOR CONVERSION

Second Sunday of Advent

7 December 2025

Once there was a newspaper cartoon that showed several lions and lambs living contentedly in the same pen. Outside the pen was a caption which read: "**PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE.**" The owner was asked how he achieved this remarkable result. "**Oh, quite easily," her replied, each day I just throw in a few more lambs.**"

Though a parody of the prophecy of Isaiah in today's first reading (11:1-10), namely, "**The wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them**", the cartoon illustrates the kind of peace among the people that Prince of Peace will bring to the world.

In Isaiah's time, Ahaz of the house of David was king. He was a weak leader and as such brought Judah to ruins. The people longed for a leader who would restore the country to peace and prosperity. Comparing the ruined country to the stump of a tree, Isaiah prophesied that God would bring out a shoot from the tree's stump, a prince, who will fulfill the people's expectations. He will rule with justice and righteousness and thus bring about peace in the land. Finally, he *will stand as a banner for the people; the nations will rally to him.*

The Jews in Jesus' time were familiar with this prosperity. Yet, when Jesus finally came as its fulfillment, they refused to recognize him. This despite the fact that the Father chose John the Baptizer to be his Son's herald to prepare the people for his coming and to point him out to them when he would start his ministry (Mt 3:1-12). John's message to the people was simple yet profound, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" should be the spirit that should prevail among us during this season of Advent. Yet watching television or reading the newspapers or going to colorfully decorated and lighted department stores or malls these days, the message that comes across very strongly is, "This is the season for shopping." This commercialization of Christmas completely runs counter to the message of Advent!

If Advent is the time for preparing ourselves for the coming of Jesus into the world and into our hearts, then the message of Advent should really be: "This is the season of praying." For what? For conversion, for a change of mind and heart about what is important in life. In short, to place our spiritual homes in order.

For this, we can take our cue from John who was a voice of one crying out in the desert and whose divinely assigned mission was to prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. 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 (from Luke 3:4-6). This text from Isaiah is a description of what people were expected to do when a king planned to visit a part of his kingdom. Reflecting on this text in its spiritual sense may help us realize what it takes to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Lord.

MAKE STRAIGHT HIS PATHS.

Just like the flow of a river, we are often tempted to take the line of least resistance. Instead of living up to what is right- the straight path - we tend to sacrifice our convictions to please others, to be accepted by them, rather than to be pleasing in the Lord's sight. **EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE FILLED.**

When we come across a big, deep and muddy hole in the road, our tendency is to give up to the trip. How many of us have given up in trying to control our passions or have drowned our problems and/or feelings of rejection in alcohol, gambling and drugs? What is asked of us is to exert more efforts to be aware of the areas in our lives that need to be touched and changed by God's forgiveness.

EVERY MOUNTAIN AND HILL SHALL BE MADE LOW.

Pride, which makes us think that we tower above everyone else because of our "sterling" qualities, stops us from reaching out to others or prevents others to reach out to us. Pride brings about misunderstanding and discord while humility does the reverse.

ROUGH WAYS MADE SMOOTH.

How many times have we repulsed people with our rough ways? We often say that we are to love one another. Yet have we taken steps to make ourselves more lovable by smoothing out our rough manners and dispositions?

Obviously, we have to undertake some soul-searching during the Season of Advent so that God, with our cooperation, can affect real conversion in us. Then our hearts will be ready for Jesus on Christmas Day. Then the peace of the Prince of Peace will be ours, which we can then pass on to others. Then the much-awaited peace in the world may become a reality.