

2 nd Sunday of Advent
Baruch 5:1-9
Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11
Luke 3:1-6

A. Text/Context

- In the first reading when the Israelites were under Babylonian captivity the prophet Baruch tells us the Israelites that one day God will lead them back to their own home and country. The people happily wait for the coming of the kingdom of God
- And while the Israelites were subjected to oppression under the Babylonians, the prophet brought the message of hope from God to the people and they rejoiced thinking that God remembered them
- In the second reading, St. Paul exhorts that Christians may increase in love and that they may be pure and blameless when the day of Christ will come. St. Paul exhorted them to prepare for the Lord's coming
- And the gospel today finds us St. Luke giving us names of the political and religious leaders during the time when Jesus is about to begin his public ministry
- So we have the popular names like Pontius Pilate, Herod, Philip, and Lysanias and they are all loyal to Rome and they don't actually serve the needs of the people
- The Roman empire simply gave them tolerance especially in the exercise of their religion to do rituals required in their faith without any disturbance
- Even the temple authorities like the high priests Annas and Caiaphas can no longer be hoped for by the people because they have connivance with the Roman authorities
- The high priests Annas and Caiaphas will soon be the ones who will facilitate the crucifixion of Jesus later on
- And even God until this time had a very long silence. There were no prophets sent by God in order to reveal or remind the people of his message. People are losing hope in this hapless situation

- Palestine is now like a barren desert because there are no rulers who will lead the people to a life with God
- In this desolate situation, somewhere in the desert a man by the name of John the Baptist suddenly emerged proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins
- As foretold by the prophet Isaiah he shouted: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. The depression in the valleys will now be filled and the mountains and hills be leveled, so that the surface will now be plain and flat
- He is exhorting the people to prepare themselves through repentance so that their sins may be forgiven so that they will cleanse themselves in preparation for the arrival of the Lord. That they may have a clean heart so that the lord will live in them
- And the summary of the whole message of John is a renewal of the old life in order to be ready to embrace a new life with God
- O many people repented and have themselves baptized by John and from then on, they waited happily for the Lord

B. Human Situation

- This is the excitement of the joyful waiting of the arrival of the Redeemer that we all commemorate in this season of advent
- Advent is like a family who for example the father in the family works overseas and the family has not been complete for many years
- And now the family heard the news that the father will soon be home for Christmas and so the whole family will now prepare for the arrival
- But what, if the whole family was not prepared to welcome the father? Perhaps, the children will hide in their rooms afraid to make an accounting of their grades in school
- Perhaps the wife will cover up all the useless expenses and she will be too ashamed to face her husband
- And surely there will be trouble because nothing is invested or saved from the hard-earned pay for the long years of work

C. Challenge

- My brothers and sisters, this is the very essence of advent. The joyful waiting of Jesus because of what prize? It is not just a mere prize or reward but everyone will witness the salvation of God. Salvation is the one that is at stake!
- This is the challenge of the readings and the gospel today
- Advent is giving us the time to prepare ourselves. God is giving us the time to make amends with our past mistakes
- This is the period of transition and the transformation of our lives. That is why advent is a season of penance
- God is giving us the chance to reconcile with him, to reconcile with our fellow human beings. This is the season of forgiveness and reconciliation
- Forgiveness and reconciliation are related to each other but the two are not the same actually
- We need to forgive those who wronged us because it is demanded by Christian charity
- Di ba naririnig natin yan patawarin mo na lang ako kasi di ko alam ang tunay na dahilan
- Sasagot naman yong isa, ano pa nga ba ang magagawa ko, kundi patawarin ka at nangyari na ang lahat
- Now listen to this: Forgiveness is supposed to be given automatically kung nagkasala ang iba sa atin
- Forgiveness is supposed to be asked automatically kung tayo ay nagkasala sa iba. That is a give and take relationship
- If forgiveness means that way, what is now the meaning of reconciliation?
- Reconciliation has to follow after forgiveness is given because to reconcile is to rectify or correct the mistakes
- Reconciliation is to make restitution or payment for the wrong we did in order to restore a shattered or broken relationship
- For short, we make the offense, we ask forgiveness for that offense, and finally we pay for such offense that has already been forgiven
- For example in a marital relationship one of the partners has been unfaithful. The one who committed the infidelity will ask for forgiveness and the one who is offended will grant forgiveness
- So that is beautiful. Forgiveness is now present but it does not stop there. The offender must make a restitution, he or she must repair the damage done, the offender must make amends for the wrongdoing in order to be fully reconciled
- There can be no total healing of a broken relationship if we cannot see justice given to the offended party
- If we are already forgiven, we need to satisfy the justice of God. This is a requirement because God is merciful and just at the same time
- If there is divine mercy, there is also divine justice that is why this is being shown in the icons of our devotion to the Lord. We have the portrait of the Divine Mercy, and we also have the portrait of Jesus as Christ the King because He will come as a just judge on the Day of Judgment
- If we have not fully atoned for the sins we commit while we are still alive, then we will have to pay for it in the purifications of purgatory until we are fully cleansed
- My brothers and sisters, Advent is a season of hope. Today is the hour of forgiveness and renewal. This is now the time to begin our new life with God again
- Do not delay your forgiveness. Ask for it, and grant it to those who ask for it
- Make the payment or the restitution that is necessary in order to be fully reconciled
- When the final hour arrives, we are ready to face our King for judgment