

Advent II [Year B]

Homily by Fr. Maraiiah

Homecoming is the central theme of the Scripture readings for the Second Sunday of Advent. All three readings focus on the absolute necessity of our getting ready for Christ's "Homecoming" into our hearts and lives by true repentance, reparation, prayer and the renewal of our lives. They also remind us that the past coming of Jesus 2000 years ago, the present daily coming of Jesus into our lives through the Eucharistic celebration, through the Scriptures and through the praying community, and his future coming are actually the fulfillment of God's saving plan for us all, from all eternity.

The first reading, taken from the prophet Isaiah, tells us about the Babylonian exiles coming home to their native country, Judah, and their holy city, Jerusalem. Isaiah assures his people that the Lord will lead them in a grand procession to their homeland and take care of them as a shepherd cares for his sheep. **The second reading**, taken from the second letter of St. Peter, invites us to get ready to go home to Heaven with Jesus at his *Second Coming*. Peter tells those who doubt the Second Coming of Jesus that God's way of counting time is different from ours and that God has His own reasons for delaying the Second Coming of Christ. **The Gospel** tells us through John the Baptist how we should prepare to receive Jesus our Savior's "coming home" into our lives during the Advent season by repentance and the renewal of life. John preached that the appropriate behavior for those preparing "the way of the Lord" was to be baptized "as they confessed their sins." He wanted the Jews to prepare their lives for the Messiah by filling in the valleys of prejudice, leveling the mountains of pride and straightening out their crooked paths of injustice and immorality. John recommended a baptism of repentance in the river Jordan to the Jews who were familiar with ritual and symbolic washings. The most amazing thing about John's baptism was that, as a Jew, he was asking fellow-Jews to submit to the baptism of repentance which only a Gentile was obliged to undergo.

Life message: 1) We need to prepare for the rebirth of Jesus: We are invited by the Church to prepare for Christmas by repenting of our sins and renewing our lives so that Jesus may be reborn in us. Let us ask with Alexander Pope the challenging question, "What do I profit, if Jesus is born in thousands of cribs all over the world unless he is born in my heart and in my life?"

2) We need to allow Jesus to be reborn in our lives. People around us should recognize Jesus' rebirth in our lives by our sharing love, unconditional forgiveness, compassionate and merciful heart and spirit of humble and committed service.

3) Let us accept the challenge of John the Baptist to turn this Advent season into a real spiritual "homecoming" by making the necessary preparations for the fresh arrival of our Lord and Savior Jesus into our hearts and lives.