

My Dear St. Francis of Assisi Family,

On this Second Sunday of Advent, our gospel introduces us to John the Baptist. As this season focuses on preparation, John the Baptist serves as our perfect guide, for he is the precursor of Christ—the one who prepared the way of the Lord. Let us reflect on several key themes from the gospel.

The gospel describes John as one who proclaims "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." While we naturally associate baptism with John, the gospel emphasizes that his ministry centered on proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. This clarifies our path of preparation for the Advent season. Our preparation calls for genuine conversion—a turning away from sin. While the confession of our sins is essential, we must first embrace the process of repentance. True repentance begins with a humble acknowledgment of our sins, which is a prerequisite for receiving the sacrament of reconciliation.

The gospel further reveals John as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: "a voice crying out in the desert: prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every mountain and hill shall be made low." This prophecy finds its completion in John's ministry.

This leads us to consider: How can we prepare the way of the Lord? How can we make His paths straight? Often, we become preoccupied with matters that actually obstruct God's presence in our lives. If our Christmas celebration excludes God—if we focus solely on exchanging gifts while forgetting the Greatest Gift, Jesus—we impede the Lord's coming into our hearts.

Advent Blessings,

Fr. Vincent