



Second Sunday of Advent

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. John went proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah: *A voice of one crying out in the desert: "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."*

Introductory Prayer: Lord, you know the sincerity of my desire to spend this time with you. As I begin this meditation, I believe that you are here with me, that you never abandon me. Because I love you, my one wish is to please and console you in your solitude in the tabernacle. I hope in the boundless mercy that motivated your incarnation. May we one day meet again in your heavenly kingdom.

Petition: Give me the grace to renew my Advent preparation.

1. The Concrete History: Today's Gospel contains a veritable roster of First Century Palestinian big-names, both religious and political. Why? St Luke wants to emphasize that God's marvelous deeds do not happen in a vacuum, but in the concrete reality of history. The greatest of God's interventions, the Incarnation — when the Word became flesh — happened at a concrete time and place. This should have great impact on our spiritual lives. Jesus' coming among us cannot be just an abstract idea that I learned in

CCD. Jesus came to this world for ME! This overwhelming love calls forth a grateful response, unless I try to keep it at a safe distance. Jesus came to our world. Will I let him into mine?

2. A Voice Crying Out in the Desert: The ministry of John the Baptist was an important part of God's plan to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah. He was very successful and opened many hearts to repentance and eventual faith in Jesus. So, it is somewhat ironic that the phrase "crying out in the desert" usually refers to a noble but futile effort. That, unfortunately, could be the case now, if I am allowing the Holy Spirit's inspirations to die in the "desert" of my self-absorption. Am I so wrapped up in the material side of Christmas preparation that I am forgetting the spiritual preparation?

3. "Prepare the Way of the Lord!" The memory of the Incarnation and the continuous prompting of the Holy Spirit in our hearts add up to the great program of Advent "Prepare the way of the Lord." We are called as Christians to do precisely this. Society is starving for the message of Christ. All of our prayers and work should be done with the spirit of faith, so that we are indeed preparing the way of the Lord.

Conversation with Christ: Jesus, you came into our world, taking on our human condition. For too long, this has been just an idea for me. Let it sink into my heart and stir my will to action. You have loved me so much. I must return my love with concrete deeds. I recommit myself to fight for your Kingdom.

Resolution: I will offer up three simple invocations spread throughout today, telling Jesus I love him and wish to prepare my heart to welcome him this Christmas.