“Stay with us, Lord”
2021-2022 Year of the Holy Eucharist, Diocese of Jackson
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year C)
December 5, 2021

I. “Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery; put on the splendor of glory from God forever” (Baruch 5:1)
A. The prophet Baruch speaks to the People of God from exile in Babylon of a time when God will finally deliver them from their captors.
1. But even when Israel had it all (King David leading at the height of his powers, the Kingdom united, etc.), sin still threatened and ultimately undermined the Kingdom of Israel. It split into two, and then it fissured completely with the Assyrians conquering the Northern Kingdom and the Babylonians taking the south.
2. David’s sin, Solomon’s sin, and the sins of so many in the community slowly but surely eroded Israel’s freedom. The kings of Israel were ultimately subjugated by more powerful forces than Assyria and Babylon.
3. So what is the splendor and glory that Baruch is promising? Is it simply a return to the land that had been taken from the people?
B. “In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee” (St. Luke 3:1).
1. This preamble alone is enough to see that the freedom Christ is bringing will not be an earthly one. There was plenty of secular bureaucracy in the Holy Land at the time of Jesus.
2. No, John preaches a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And so it is a freedom from sin that Christ the true king brings through his life, death, and resurrection.

II. “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths” (St. Luke 3:4b).
A. If our true freedom in Christ is freedom from sin, then how can we make straight his path to our heart?
1. John the Baptist prepares the people of Israel to welcome the true King, God Himself, by urging them to repent.
2. We have an incredible opportunity with the sacrament of reconciliation.
3. Our will is the most potent force for good or evil on the face of the earth. Many of the greatest sins of our current time is that we do not realize the power of our choices.
   a) E.g. (1) We share a snap-chat with some friends that making fun of a classmate. It’s just a silly joke, but then it gets screen-shotted and shared with the whole school, and it becomes a devastating ordeal for the target of the joke. (2) We go online and look at content we know we shouldn’t look at. That one choice is part of a worldwide money-making exploitation machine that enslaves women and men.
B. Make straight the paths of the Lord in your will, in other words, in your heart!
1. Make a good confession this Advent, and begin a practice of good, healthy confession.
2. Make it a habit, go once a month.
3. Make it simple, but substantial (what are your major sins, how many times did you commit them — we want to find a balance between damaging scrupulosity and laxity)
4. Come to mass expecting to be challenged and taught how to be more and more free from those actions and attitudes that lead us to choose that which does not come from God, and bring your struggles before the Lord in the Eucharist. One of the effects of
receiving communion when we are properly disposed (we are not in a state of mortal sin) is that our lesser (venial) sins are forgiven, what a wonderful blessing!

C. We are living in a blessed time when the words of Baruch have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We have access to the great freedom from sin that reconciliation offers, and we see the glory and splendor of God before us in the Eucharist. So make straight the path of the Lord this Advent and receive him with ever growing joy this Christmas!

Prepared by Fr. Nick Adam
The Catechism of the Catholic Church is really long, but really our faith in Jesus Christ is pretty simple. We are offered a living relationship with God himself through life in the Church but sin threatens this relationship because we are constantly tempted to love other things more than God. So make straight the paths to your heart this Advent. What are the fissures in the soil, the fault-lines that have appeared since you last went to confession? Has there been an earth-shattering, catastrophic meteor of sin that has tilted the axis of your soul away from the Lord, also known as mortal sin, a direct abuse of one of the ten commandments which has put put you as queen or king of a lonely little mountaintop kingdom with barb-wired fence keeping out Jesus who can heal you. Well then. Make straight the paths of the Lord. You don’t even have to cut any of the barbed-wire or climb down the sheer cliff. You just need to give him permission to see you. To see your sins, to see your failings, to know what’s wrong. That’s it.

John the Baptist prepares the people of Israel to welcome the true King, God Himself, by urging them to repent. Our will is the most potent force for good or evil on the face of the earth. If we want to be life-giving, life-sustaining, life-enhancing people, we can do so by our choices. If we want to be life-taking death machines, we can do so by our choices. Many of the greatest sins of our current time is that we do not realize the power of our choices. We share a snap-chat with some friends that is making fun of a classmate. They are just a few words, a silly joke, but then it gets screen-shotted and shared with the whole school, and it becomes a devastating ordeal for the target of the joke. We go online and look for content we know we shouldn’t look at, but it’s just that once. But that once is part of a worldwide money-making exploitation machine that enslaves women and men, but it’s just that one choice.

So our choices are the most important things in the world. And if our choices are not in line with what God wants us to do, then we need to work on changing them. This is where repentance comes in. Confession is not meant to be the once a year spring cleaning or twice a year Advent and Easter dust up that it has become. Confession should be used by the faithful to receive God’s grace to change their will. Slowly, yes, but surely. We’ve got to find a better balance between a scrupulosity that fears the fires of hell every time we have a bad thought and a laxity that leaves us feeling like everything else is a priority before God.

So here’s to healthy confession: where we are brutally honest in the best way. Where we take a blowtorch to the defenses we’ve put up between us and God and we just tell it like it is. Forgive me Father for I have sinned it has been six years since my last confession. I want to make straight the paths for Jesus to work on my heart so here goes: I have broken commandment x probably 2500 times, I mean I’m not positive but I really tried to think about it seriously and I’m confident that the Lord will understand because this is from my heart. This is a choice that I am making for him. And I broke commandment y 100 times, and commandment z 600 times. And yes, I plan on coming back soon, maybe even every month, just to keep myself in check because I don’t feel like doing this math again. And I plan to start examining my conscience every night because I know that my choices matter.