

2nd Sunday of Advent

“Jerusalem, take off your robe of mourning and misery; put on the splendor of glory from God forever.” At some point we have to stop crying and moaning. Enough now. It is time to focus. The world is happening as it does and as it should and we are part of it. There is danger all around us. But there is also great joy and gladness. Where am I in the midst of it all? I stand in a fog and I am not sure which way to go now. The prophet Baruch tells us where to go: “Up Jerusalem! Stand upon the heights; look to the east and see your children gathered at the Word of the Holy One, rejoicing. That is the way we are to go. We look to the East and we see the dawn approaching. We have lived in darkness too long. The night is full of sorrow and suffering. The night is a scary place when you listen to the howling and the rustle of the winds. We don’t know what’s out there. We learn to live in fear. They are out there and they are searching for us. Who will come to save us? The light comes and daylight makes me feel safe again. In the desert light of day we gaze upon the Baptist. Sometimes darkness brings its own consolations because we don’t have to see very far. In the bright of day we find ourselves looking at this strange man. He wears his desert clothes well. He looks completely out of place standing in front of my house. He stands on my lawn and he shouts his message. “Prepare a way for the Lord, make straight His paths.” My first thought is to wonder if the neighbors are seeing this. My second thought, John, shouldn’t you be down at St. Catherine’s shouting this stuff? Why are you here in front of my house shouting all this stuff? Maybe that’s the thing. Maybe the prophecy of the Messiah never came to my house before. I love going to the Church because it starts to look Adventy. I never think about the message of John the Baptist being shouted at me from my own lawn. Paul’s prayer is lovely today and it is offered for me. “May your love increase ever more and more in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.” Now is the appointed hour. Now is the day of salvation.

With love, Fr. Pat