

Living the Word: 2 Peter 3.8-15a

Seasons of preparation are sometimes regarded as times when we must be extra watchful. Peter here reminds us to make good use of time we might regard as being merely delay. Extra preparation and constant vigilance are of crucial importance. We also might consider the loving kindness of the Lord – he does not want to lose any of us, but rather that all might be brought to redemption. As Christmas approaches, we should reflect on the great opportunity that is afforded to us by the coming of the Lord: a chance for us to renew our lives and redouble our efforts in prayer, not only for ourselves, but also for those who have lost their way. We must make sure our own lives are ordered so that we might be found to be without spot or blemish.

Advent Traditions: Advent Prose

The Advent Prose is sometimes known by the Latin name *Rorate Caeli* taken from the Prophecy of Isaiah (Isaiah 45.8) and when sung in English, translated as 'Drop down ye heavens from above.' This phrase is often sung as a refrain to the Prose which can be used at Mass or during Morning and Evening Prayer. At Mass it might be used as part of a procession or more properly between the second reading and the Gospel. The Advent Prose speaks of the longing of the Prophets and Patriarchs for the coming of the Messiah. Their hope and longing is the same as the Church's as we pray for the coming of Christ. The Advent Prose makes a good text to reflect upon during Advent as it speaks profoundly of the human longing for God. Listen to the words as they are sung and see what God is saying to you through them.

From the Fathers

John is the voice, but the Lord is the Word who was in the beginning. John is the voice that lasts for a time; from the beginning Christ is the Word who lives for ever. Take away the word, the meaning, and what is the voice? Where there is no understanding, there is only a meaningless sound. The voice without the word strikes the ear but does not build up the heart. Do you need proof that the voice passes away but the divine Word remains? Where is John's baptism today? It served its purpose, and it went away. Now it is Christ's baptism that we celebrate. It is in Christ that we all believe; we hope for salvation in him. This is the message the voice cried out.

From Sermons, St Augustine of Hippo (354-430, Bishop, theologian)

10th December 2023

Second Sunday of Advent



Prepare a way for the Lord

One of the ways in which we can prepare a way for the Lord, and as the Advent prose suggests, bring forth the Saviour from the earth, is to repent and confess our sins. If we acknowledge that we are in need of God's grace and mercy we are half way there. St Paul reminds us that the Second Coming of Christ is only delayed for our good. God wants all people to repent. A thousand years to him are like one single day. He is waiting for us to amend our lives so that, at the end of the day, he will find a transformed world. There will be no need for judgement or hell because all will have chosen the better part. His patience works in our favour. Let us listen to the voice of him who cries in the wilderness and prepare a path for him by deeds of charity and acts of love. Thus consolation and peace will become the signs and the foretaste of Christ's eternal Kingdom.

Today's Gospel: St. Mark 1:1-8

Collect

Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son, but may our learning of heavenly wisdom gain us admittance to his company. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.