

**ADVENT II: (Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009) BARUCH 5:1-9; PHILIPPIANS 1:4-6, 8-11; LUKE 3:1-6**

With the approach of the Christmas decoration, shopping and parties, sometimes we can get lost in the crowd as what to buy or how we look. The readings of today, however, encourage an interior transformation.

I have a story to share with: In December 1903, after many attempts, the Wright brothers were successful in getting their "flying machine" off the ground. Thrilled, they telegraphed this message to their sister Katherine: "We have actually flown 120 feet. Will be home for Christmas." Katherine hurried to the editor of the local news paper and showed him the message. He glanced at it and said, "How nice. The boys will be home for Christmas." He totally missed the big news - man had flown! Many of us are thrilled at the gifts, food and the holiday season, ignoring the fact that Christ's birth is the true reason for this "holiday season" and that these are HOLY DAYS intended to give Jesus a homecoming by bringing HIM into our daily lives.

Each year, the second and the third Sundays in Advent center on John the Baptist, reminding us that if we want to prepare properly for the coming of Jesus we need to listen to the Baptizer's message. The evangelists realized the importance of John's message. Hence all the four of them wrote about John's preaching.

Quoting the prophet Isaiah, John the Baptist declared, "*Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth*" (Lk. 3:5). The quotation John used is from Isaiah 40:3-5, where the prophet was calling the people to prepare for the Lord's visitation. The preparation on which John insisted was a preparation of heart and of life.

He is calling us, too, to get ready for something so great that it fills our emptiness with expectation. Hence, the truly important goal for us is to prepare our hearts to receive the Lord. By emphasizing the last line of the quotation, "*All flesh will see the salvation of God,*" For salvation, we have to look to Jesus -- Jesus present in Scripture, Jesus present in the sacraments, Jesus present in our coming together in his name, Jesus present in the lives

of his followers. Perhaps if we began to see Jesus in each other and in ourselves, and started to treat one another (and ourselves) as we would treat Jesus, more of the world might come to see God's salvation.

Let me conclude with a small prayer: "Lord, let your light burn brightly in my heart that I may know the joy and freedom of your kingdom. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and empower me to witness the truth of your Gospel and to point others to Jesus Christ."