

Be ready! Expect Jesus!

Repeat: What must I do to prepare for Christ's coming?

We are in the midst of preparations for the Christmas celebrations.

- **Parties to go to like the parish pre- Christmas celebration tomorrow at 12:30.**
- **Presents to purchase and wrap**
- **People to visit**
- **Finish tests and projects**
- **Decorate**
- **Food to get ready**

Sometimes we just forget to prepare and get ready for the coming of the Lord into our lives.

The key question we need to ask ourselves is: What must I do to prepare for Christ's coming?

People in our midst calling us to get ready, to prepare for the Lord's coming in the Advent season.

- **Jeremiah**
- **Isaiah quoted by John the Baptist last week.**
 - **Every valley shall be filled and every mountain shall be laid low.**

- Interior work:
 - prayer; to become conscious of his presence;
little blue book and scripture readings
 - baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin:
reconciliation: this coming Monday and
Saturday

- Actions: The people ask John, the Baptist, What must I do to prepare for Christ's coming? After doing the interior work of prayer and experiencing the forgiveness of God, we need to put into action the interior changes of our hearts.
 - We read in the gospel today, the crowd came up to John the Baptist asking: "What should we do to prepare for His coming?"
His answer is a simple one: "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; whoever has food must do the same". Many people are very open to sharing at this time of the year with those in need. (Giving tree; giving to others in need.) Compliment your selves! Yet sometimes we find ourselves asking,
 - How many coats do I have to give?

- **How generous do I need to be?**
- **How much giving is enough giving?**
- **Do other people really deserve your “stuff”, my money? After all, I worked hard for it and others just take my generosity for granted.**
- **When we run into roadblocks to our charity, it is time to do some more interior work of prayer and experiencing God’s forgiveness. True Christian generosity can only overflow when we have a consciousness of a loving God and a merciful God.**
- **Then the tax collectors came up to John the Baptist and asked: What must I do to prepare for Christ’s coming? Tax collectors have become rich by putting their thumb on the scale. Can he really live the lifestyle he is accustomed to if he does not cheat a little? Can he live with the cutback with the revenue by living without cheating others?**

- **Soldiers ask: What must I do to prepare for Christ's coming? They are asking "Can a soldier really have the respect of the community without pushing people around? People will stop fearing the Roman military and lose people's respect for them.**
 - **Today people in law enforcement and the military face the same question in the performance of their jobs. Do they need to use unreasonable force when dealing with those who are suspected of making trouble in society? Will the public lose respect for them if they deal justly with the public**
 - **John the Baptist is not simply speaking to people in law enforcement and the military. He is talking to all of us in power positions over others. He is saying, "Stop bullying". Youth need to stop bullying other youth: Bullying can often be a way to be noticed and respected? We find that many youth who bully were bullied themselves in their homes.**

- **If we identify attitudes of bullying in our actions, it may call us back to do more interior work of prayer and experiencing God's forgiveness.**

Throughout his whole life, even John the Baptist had to continually be going back to the interior work of prayer to clarify his understanding of Jesus and how Jesus was calling him to live.

Remember in Luke's gospel when John is arrested, thrown in prison, and is about to have his head lopped off for standing up to a corrupt leader. He sends his disciples to Jesus with one question:

"Are you the one who is to come or should we look for another?"

John thought that Jesus would deal swiftly with his enemies.

Remember John's words in today's gospel? He said the Messiah would gather the wheat (good people) into his barn but burn the chaff (sinners) in unquenchable fire!". John is still needs to do his interior work with Jesus and repenting of his attitudes.

Jesus' response to the disciples John's disciples whom he sent from prison is, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life the poor have the good news preached to them, and blessed are they who are not scandalized in me."

Jesus might have put it in the words of our second reading from St. Paul's letter to the _____.

Rejoice in the Lord always! Again I say, rejoice. The Lord is near!

Yes, the Lord is near.

And prophet is celebrating because, as he proclaims, "The Lord is in your midst! (Isaiah)

And you ask, What must I do to prepare for Christ's coming?

- Pray
- Experience repentance for the forgiveness of sins
- Change the behaviors of your life to be in line with the one who is coming.

My people, It is time to get ready; It is time to expect Jesus!