

**Did you see the sign outside: It flashing: Breaking news; Breaking news: Then in bold red letters: Jesus is coming!**

**For many people they must think we are just a little crazy. It must be that Catholic group trying to get our attention. Even people from our own community might be saying, "Father has gone a little looney."**

**The message on the sign is not meant for them. It is for another set of people, a people who are dissatisfied and frustrated with life.**

**It is for those who are ready to change from dissatisfaction and frustration. There are many people who seem to be doing all the things in life they should be: fulfilling all their duties the best they can, but something seems radically wrong. Maybe you are one of those people.**

- We continue to fight for money and position, but know that the payoff, if and when it comes, is not all that it promises.**
- Or we see social inequalities in our country and world and we cannot tolerate them as easily as we used to.**
- Or we hear of leaders not serving but abusing those they are called to serve.**
- We experience dysfunction in their homes.**
- In other words, in many ways WE EXPERIENCE SIN.**

**By experiencing sin, I mean experiencing any thought, deed or attitude that breaks the bond between God and myself, between myself and others, myself and the earth.**

**We are like people in today's gospel who, at times, are dissatisfied and desperate. People in Jesus' time ventured from their cities and villages out into the desert to hear news from the prophet, named John the Baptist.**

**Desperate women and men who were willing to risk their future because their past had become intolerable. They felt dead and they were dying through their own actions.**

**They came to hear John the Baptist to invite them to a new way of life, to repent, to change their way of living. For a moment, let us join the crowd to hear what John had to say that first Advent season.**

**John's message is simple: Prepare the way of the Lord!**

**Prepare the way of the Lord! Someone more powerful than I will provide full life in the Spirit! That first Advent resonates with our hearts today: Breaking News! Jesus is coming. Prepare ye the way of the Lord!**

To prepare the way for the Lord, the first step, John recommends is purification, letting go of whatever binds us. He invites them to wash, to be baptized in the Jordan River and be cleansed of their destructive ways of living.

But how do we let go, how do we purify ourselves?

We can do so in the sacrament of reconciliation; we can be washed clean; we can be reconciled with God and our neighbor and the earth. I invite you to participate in the upcoming reconciliation services, the first one here, next Saturday at 11:00 and the second is week from Monday at 7:00 PM at St. Scholastica Parish. We can come and confess that leading a desperate life is not for us, We seek something better.

Another step we can take to change our lives is to pray.

We need to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of the Lord. In moments of prayer God will bring us the Spirit of new life. There are many ways we can pray. For instance,

- Little Blue books (all of them gone!), or
- Reading the scriptures of the day (USCCB: daily readings).

- **We can also begin to change our lives through acts of charity:**  
Some parish projects of charity are gifts to
- COTS (all the tags are gone!)
- Gifts for those in need in our community through the St. Vincent de Paul Society in the giving tree this week.

**And finally we can develop and grow into a shared vision of the kingdom by bonding with others who are committed to a different way of living.**

- Regularly attending mass
- Being an active part of the faith family (evangelization committee and St. Vincent de Paul neighborhood outreach, food depot)

**(PAUSE)**

**In today's gospel John the Baptist echoes the words of the Prophet Isaiah in today's powerful first reading. "Comfort, give comfort to my people says the Lord. And how do we take the first steps to bring comfort to our souls and to our weary world? How do we fill in the valleys of depression and level the mountains of hate and prejudice? Quite simply: come now my people and let us prepare the way of the Lord!**

