



Lectio Divina: Second Sunday in Advent. Year B

Rome (Italy), Sr. HERMINIA RINCÓN MARIN, 06 December 2020.- “Go up on a high mountain, Zion, herald of good news cry out at the top of your voice, Jerusalem! Cry out, do not fear!... Here is your God” (Is 40:9).

John the Baptist is one of the great figures of Advent, with his presence and his preaching he announces the arrival of the Messiah and the inauguration of a new era of justice and peace that will gladden the hearts of the people and strengthen hope in the promise of salvation.

John the Baptist invites all people, to conversion to prepare the way for the coming of Our Savior; to pave the way and straighten his paths one need to open oneself to the grace of forgiveness and the life of the Spirit offered in the Lord.

The time of Advent is the opportunity that the Church offers us to become aware of this truth, to strengthen our hope and to open ourselves to this grace. While it is true that we are invited to discover this in the richness of the liturgy, it is also true that we must discover it in these moments of crisis, transformation, suffering and pain of our people, but equally of hope and trust in the merciful love of God always at work in the world and in our history. Like the disciples of John, we need to be attentive to discover it in every situation, follow it and guide others with our example of life.

INVOCATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Lord, make my mind and heart open to Your Spirit to receive Your Word, sharpen my senses to know how to listen, see and feel Your loving and saving presence in my history and in the history of humanity, to discover in your Word, the paths of new life that You have prepared for us.

GOSPEL

Mark 1: 1- 8: ¹The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ [the Son of God]. ²The Preaching of John the Baptist. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “*Behold, I am sending*

my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. ³A voice of one crying out in the desert: *'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.'*" ⁴John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. ⁶John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. ⁷And this is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the holy Spirit."

DIVISION OF THE TEXT FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING

Mark 1:1: Opening and title of the Gospel of Mark.

Mark 1:2-3: Citation of the prophets Malachi and Isaiah.

Mark 1:4-5: Content and repercussions of the preaching of John the Baptist.

Mark 1:6-8: Meaning of the preaching of John the Baptist.

Mark 1:1 In the first sentence of his Gospel, Mark says: *"The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus. **Son of God!**"* (Mk 1:1). At the end of the Gospel, at the moment of Jesus' death, a Roman soldier exclaims: *Truly this man was the **Son of God!*** (Mk 15:39). At the beginning and at the end there is this title of the **Son of God**. Between the beginning and the end, throughout the pages of the Gospel, Mark clarifies how this central truth of our faith should be understood and announced: Jesus is the **Son of God**.

Mark 1:2-3: The seed of the Good News is hidden in the hope of the people. To indicate the beginning of that *Good News*, Mark quotes the prophets Malachi and Isaiah. In the texts of these two prophets the hope that dwelt in the hearts of the people in the time of Jesus appears. The people expected a messenger, announced by Malachi, to come and *prepare the way of the Lord*, (Ml 3:1); it has also been proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah who says: *Voice of the one who cries: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight* (Is 40:3). For Mark the seed of the Good News is the hope raised up in people by the great promises made in the past through the prophets. So far, the hope of the people is the hook to which the Good News is attached; in order to know how to start announcing this Good News, it is important to discover the hope that the people have in their hearts.

Mark 1:4-5: The popular movement aroused by John the Baptist makes the hope of the people grow with the call to conversion and the testimony of their life. The whole region of Judea and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem went to meet John! Mark uses the texts of Malachi and Isaiah to enlighten this movement and indicates that, with the coming of John the Baptist,

the hope of the people has begun to find an answer, to be fulfilled. The seed of the Good News begins to sprout, to grow.

Mark 1:6-8: *John the Baptist is the Prophet Elijah that people were waiting for.* It was said of the Prophet Elijah that he came to prepare the way of the Messiah “*by turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.*” (Ml 3:24; Lk 1:17), that is, they expected Elijah to come to rebuild community life. Elijah was known as “*a man clothed in skins and a leather belt around his waist*” (2Kings 1:8). Mark says that John was dressed in camel skins. He clearly indicated that John the Baptist had come to fulfill the mission of the Prophet Elijah (Cf. Mk 9:11-13). In the year 70, when Mark writes, many people thought that John the Baptist was the Messiah. (Cf. Acts. 19:1-3). To help them discern, Mark quotes the words of John himself: “*I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the holy Spirit*” (Mk 1:7).

SILENCE. MEDITATION

I ALLOW THE LORD TO SPEAK TO ME, I LISTEN TO HIS VOICE, I OPEN MY HEART TO HIS WORD.

Mark suggests reading history with the eyes of hope. The seed of God’s Good News is hidden in our life, in our past, in what we are living. The people of the Bible had this conviction: God is present in our lives. That is why they were concerned with remembering the events and people of the past. Losing the memory of their past is like losing one’s identity, not knowing where one came from or where one is going. They read the events of the past to learn to read those of the present and to discover in them the signs of the Kingdom, of the presence of God.

This is what Mark does at the beginning of the Gospel. He tries to discover the facts and points out the thread of hope that came from Exodus, from Moses, through the prophets Elijah, Isaiah and Malachi, until he reaches John the Baptist who sees in Jesus the one who brings hope for His people.

For a moment let us look at his personal history and ask ourselves: what has been the source of our hope throughout our lives?

On our journey of life, have we seen the hope that has been a reality? How have we perceived it?

PRAYER

Prayer is the answer to the voice of God within us, to the message of His Word to the inspirations of the Spirit. In this historical and liturgical moment that we are living, what feelings does the Spirit arouse in our interior that makes us praise, thank, or pray to the Lord?

PERSONAL PRAYER

PREPARE THE WAY

He has come to bring light into the darkness
He has come to bring freedom to the captives
He has come to restore the broken-hearted
It's time to proclaim the year of the Lord

Prepare the way, Prepare the way for our Redeemer
Prepare the way, Prepare the way for our Restorer
Make ready your heart
Make ready your home
Make ready the people of God
Prepare the way

He has come to bring hope to the hopeless
He has come to comfort all who mourn
He has come to heal our every sickness
It's time to proclaim the year of the Lord.