

### THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28*

These days the temptations are so strong to reduce ADVENT to nothing more than a time to be cozy, nostalgic and sentimental. That is the worldly message of sights and sounds of the season

But if we want to understand ADVENT correctly – that is, really understand what it means and what it's all about – we need to see it at the time for which it is meant to be: we need to see it as time to prepare for a *revolution*: God's revolution.

Last week we heard the Gospel writer Mark sound the fire the first salvo! In his first Gospel chapter and very first verse we heard proclaimed this astonishing assertion:

“The beginning of the Gosepl of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1).

There is not mistaking Marks intention: these first words of his are meant to be fighting words!

In the time of our Lord Jesus, a “gospel” was a known to be the exciting announcement of a great military victory. So, when the Roman army was crushed an enemy, people were dispatched in advance of the army's return to announce the latest imperior conquering. The people dispatched were called “evangelists” and the message they heralded was called a “gospel.”

So, the Gospel writer Mark boldly proclaims that the real good news has nothing to do with a Roman military victory nor does it have anything at all to do with Caesar.

Instead the real “gospel” has everything to do with “Jesus Christ the Son of God”.

Do you hear the title – “Son of God”? That, too, is a way that Mark helps us to see that a revolution is before us – God's revolution.

When Julius Caesar died he was declared to be divine. So, then, Augustus and all the other men standing in the long line of being Caesar were called “son of god”.

Do you hear what Mark is saying? Do you hear how bold his assertion is?

The Roman Emperor is not Son of God – Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

This gives meaning to ADVENT. Perhaps now you see why the Church is not about ADVENT being warm and cozy, nostalgic and sentimental like some perfectly framed Norman Rockwell picture.

No! The Church dares to stand up to the worldly influences that want this time of year to be nothing more than cozy, nostalgic and sentimental. The Church's bold declaration is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Jesus Christ is the true and only King.

In today's Gospel reading we hear from the beginning of the evangelist John. John the evangelist begins his Holy Gospel by quoting the prophet Isaiah (who lived 800 years before him): "prepare the way of the Lord". That is, build a highway to prepare for the return of the true King.

There is nothing cozy, nostalgic and sentimental in the hard work involved with building a highway, in preparing a way, in making straight a path for God to return.

OK, then, just how do we do this, how are we to prepare and build and make straight?

We do this by preparing our minds and hearts, our families and parish families to live in accord with the dictates of the new King. John the Evangelist boldly proclaims that we are to align our lives with the commands of the new King.

Don't take your cue from worldly powers who relentlessly seek to tell you how to prepare. For instance take the increasingly common greeting this time of year "happy holidays" – and with it, consider the multitude of politically correct ways to trying to make everyone cozy, nostalgic and sentimental – "winter break" and the like.

This is no less than the true King for whom we are preparing. We are preparing for a revolution – a revolution of God's own design. Christmas is not one among other events this time of year. No! It is the event, for Jesus is the King.

Advent is the time before Christmas for us to "wake up" and "be alert" and to "be watchful". This is the time for us to realize who is in charge of our lives – if it is not the Lord Jesus Christ then make it so.

Align your daily choices with His dictates.

In the two short weeks remaining, dare to prepare for a revolution, for no less than God is arriving.