

Second Sunday of Advent -C 2018
Baruch 5.1-9///Phil.1.4-6,8-11///Luke 3.1-6

→I think it is fair to say that one of the common quests we all have as human beings is that very often all of us are seeking, striving for, and desiring some sort of direction...some sort of pathway to follow whenever we are faced with circumstances or situations that turn life upside down

→almost any significant event that happens....whether it be in government, family, community or church....seems to always awaken our desire for some sort of direction...some sort of guidance for our lives

→just look at the happenings over the past week...the death of a president...gave cause for us to reflect on and consider where our country is...the idling of the Lordstown plant has forced us to think about the future of our area...

→a loss in our family or a health concern always gives us pause for what happens next...

→and even within our faith and the church.....various issues and circumstances continue to surface that urge us to seek direction...especially when it comes to ethics and morality, honesty and integrity

→as a result, all of us continue to struggle for direction in our lives....as we deal with relationships and families, jobs and careers, faith and church or whatever other circumstances we may face in our lives

→in the end....as we hear in today's gospel reading....we seem to be very similar to the people of long ago...wandering in the wilderness seeking some sort of direction....

→the only difference being that today....."our wilderness" is somewhat different than the wilderness of John the Baptist.....

→today there is a wide spectrum of “wildernesses” to which we are prone:

---there’s burnout – in any area--career, family, jobs

---there’s apathy – about religion, community, social justice

---there’s depression – arising from so many sources

---there’s addictions – alcohol, lust, leisure, power

---there’s guilt and doubt---about our beliefs, about what is right, what is just, correct and responsible

---and then there is stress, anxiety, tension and all sorts of things from the excessive busyness of modern everyday life

PAUSE

→these are the “wildernesses” that are a part of our lives today

→and all of these “wildernesses” point us towards seeking some sort of direction...some sort of guidance...some sort of clarity

→[and] in today's gospel, we are given the answer to finding our way out of the wilderness....."to make ready the way of the Lord to clear a straight path for him"

→to make a pathway in our lives to Christ

PAUSE

→and so the question becomes....exactly **what is this** pathway to Christ for us? Where can we find it?

→**what is** the “direction” that leads us to Christ

PAUSE

→well one of the pathways to Christ is right here in our midst, right in front of us that we very often take for granted.

→it is the aisle ways of our Church....of any Church [for that matter]

→think for a moment about how many times each of us travels down this pathway to the Lord.

→when we were infants, our parents and godparents brought us down this pathway for the first time....and in their name, they committed us to Jesus Christ by having us baptized

→and they promised that we would continue to walk down this pathway for the rest of our lives

→years later, we came down this pathway again, but this time we did it on our own...to receive body/blood of Christ, and by holding our hand out....we not only accepted a piece of bread and a cup of wine...we accepted Christ more fully into our lives

→ He became a part of us and we became a part of him

→years later...we made another trip down this pathway when we chose to be confirmed in the Spirit ---a day when we chose to live out more fully the life of Christ

→and then, some of us, have made another special trip down this pathway, as we have pledged our love to another person...

→a pledge and promise that is based on the love of Christ in our lives.

PAUSE

→and finally, our life on this earth will end, with another trip down this pathway

→we will come down it for the final time as we are ushered into eternal life

→and so////when you think about it//// this pathway plays a pretty important part in our lives

→we all walk down it often, and each time we do...we become [get] closer to Christ

→and so, perhaps the heralds voice, that is crying..."make ready the way of the Lord, clear a straight path" ...is really talking about this pathway...and the importance of it in our lives

→.....and **how** and **with what** attitude we walk down this aisle...especially during this Advent time of preparation

→we come down this pathway because we know that God has opened his arms to us...to love us...and accept us as we are

→and it is from walking down this aisle each week that we gain the strength and direction to open our arms to those in need

→it is from walking down this aisle that we gain the courage to accept God's love for us and to share it with others

→it is from walking down this aisle that we are able to remind ourselves what life is all about

→**and it is** from walking down this aisle...that our rough ways are made smooth and our curves are made straight

PAUSE

→if you are like me, you come here often, and perhaps take a lot for granted

→this aisle [this pathway] is perhaps one of them-----we all walk down many times.....and today we will do so again...

→it is our pathway to the Lord that gives meaning to our lives...calls us out of the wilderness...and allows some sense to come into our lives

let us hope [then]....that **this pathway** that will always be a part of our lives and that by walking down it yet again this Advent...our hearts will be full of hope and joy.