

Second Sunday of Advent
December 4, 2005
Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11, 2 Peter 3:8-14, Mark 1: 1-8
Homilist: Sister Carolyn McCormack, OP

The road up the hill to Flintridge offers a wonderful image as I reflect on this week's readings. Often, there are workmen, in yellow vests, carrying orange flags, whose task is filling holes and re-surfacing bumpy spots along the way. It is a part of daily life "on the hill" and it draws me into this second week of Advent. What will urge us to reflect on our Advent journey, consider the roads we are traveling this year, both inner and outer and take care of their repair? How will we ready the way of the Lord?

The readings from Isaiah and 2 Peter are full of images that capture our imagination and draw us to prayer—they are images of a loving God,

who offers tender comfort, loving forgiveness, strong leadership,
a tender shepherd's care;
who proclaims that peace is restored, kindness and truth meet, justice and peace
kiss, truth springs from earth and justice looks down from heaven;
who calls us "beloved" and reminds us he is faithful, patient and forgiving;
who holds all transforming power;
who promises a new heaven and a new earth where true justice dwell;
who encourages us to live in the moment, to conduct ourselves in holiness and
devotion---simply waiting, eager and at peace;

And then, the dramatic presence of two powerful Gospel witnesses, Isaiah and John, urging us to spend time examining our own rocky, jagged "inner landscape", noting our personal fears, anger, resentments, and mistrust—the bumps and potholes of our own lives--- and attending to them. John reminds us that Jesus has given us a baptism, not only of water but of the Holy Spirit—the very life of God. It is this power that gives us the grace to fill the empty cracks and crevices of our broken lives, allowing us to respond with mercy, compassion, forgiveness and acts of kindness. How else can God's loving, tender presence be known in our world?

Let us capture this moment and ask for the grace to clear our inner paths, that the King of Glory might find a smooth road, allowing kindness and truth, justice and peace to travel through each of us to our suffering world?

It is never too late to open up new roads for God in the wilderness of our daily living.

God is near, indeed—glory dwelling in our land.