

## Second Sunday of Advent

December 10, 2006

*Baruch 5:1-9; Philippians 1:4-6,8-11; Luke 3:1-6*

Homily by: *S. Beth Quire, O.P.*

Advent is a season that can so easily get lost. Between our regular daily tasks and the preparations for Christmas, one must really make an effort to enter into and focus on Advent. The world is screaming Christmas is already here, playing carols, bombarding us with advertisements, entertaining us with parties and tinsel.

And yet the Church is calling us: to take time, to slow down, to be silent, to wait, to enter deeper into our center, to join Mary in her waiting to give birth. As the weather is changing to leading us into winter, we are reminded that even the plants and animals need to take this time. The winter dormancy or hibernation that is required for new life to be born in the spring.

Advent will not scream to us. It will gently move past. But without the quiet and silence of this season, how will we hear what the Spirit wants to birth in us when Christmas comes?

Today's Gospel from Luke goes out of its way to situate John the Baptist at a particular point in history. John is not intended to be a figure of someone's imagination, but to be placed in the historical context of the people of Israel under Roman occupation. John is a voice crying out against the injustices and sinfulness of his day. If John were to go about today, what would his message be to the people in our historical context living in the United States? Would he be calling us on the injustices of our society, a country with so much wealth and yet many go hungry, a country that can allow the poor whose lives were totally devastated by Katrina still after more than a year be in shambles? Would he call us on the violence in our streets and our participation in violence on the world scene? Would he be calling us into Advent so we can get to know the Prince of Peace and be able to birth him in our world and time? Might John warn us that commercialism will not save us, violence does not eliminate violence?

While getting presents for those we love and sending cards to friends are wonderful gestures, if they are done empty of the true meaning of Christmas, it can miss the point and become duty, one more thing that needs to get done, instead of expressions of LOVE. Jesus didn't come to give us more obligations. Jesus came to show us how to love and to save us from our sinful habits.

My prayer is that we take time this Advent to enter into the quiet with Mary preparing to give birth and to listen to the challenges of John calling for conversion and repentance. So that when Christmas comes we can enter into this seasons' deep meaning and know what it is the Spirit want's to birth in us this Christmas.