

“Responding to God’s Love by Growing in Holiness and Trust in Him”

1. As we now enter the 2nd full week of Advent, the Lord is calling us to reflect upon our lives and to invite the Holy Spirit to draw us more profoundly into the mystery of Christ. The first reading from the Prophet Isaiah is a **consoling** one. It reminds us of the reality that God doesn’t want to continually punish us, but rather like a loving Father wants all His children to be filled with joy and peace, and to remember that He will reward our goodness. He wants to feed His flock with the life giving grace of His life, which we receive in the Sacraments primarily, but also in the graces of daily life, to help us choose good and reject evil. He wants to shepherd us, to gather us close to His Heart, and to lead us with care. Never forget that - if you ever doubt God’s love and care for you. Trust in Him and respond in kind in your dealings with other ppl.
2. St. Paul in the 2nd reading also gives a **consoling message** to all of us who sometimes struggle with the mystery of evil and why life is so hard in this world. *“I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.”* That is an amazing truth - God is so patient and He is always working to try to draw us into His life of true love and holiness. He knows it takes time. He humbly waits for us to turn over our lives to Him, to convert and move away from sin of various sorts. He gives us the beautiful **Sacrament of Reconciliation** to heal and help us. **Make sure to make a good Confession this Advent, esp. if it’s been a while.** Please don’t take any of this for granted! God is **patient** with human beings in our spiritual blindness and foolhardy ways - not because He is a pushover or doesn’t care what we do, but rather He beckons us in the silence of our hearts and minds and conscience, to freely choose to turn away from evil and embrace goodness, which is the process of becoming more Christ-like in all that we say, and think, and do. **The reason for this is because He doesn’t want any of us to end up eternally separated from Him in Hell, but rather wants all to be saved.** He will do all He can on His end to bring it about - but we have to agree to it in our **free will**. He will never make us be good or be with Him in Heaven, if we

desire to embrace the darkness of sin and selfishness and ultimately eternal death. In the end the current heavens and earth will be destroyed by fire, of some type - maybe the sun crashing into the earth?? - But a new heavens and new earth will be created in which righteousness will fully dwell - something to look forward to. So as St. Paul says at the end of the 2nd reading: *“This is my prayer for you, that your love may increase ever more and more, in knowledge and every kind of perception, to discern what is of value, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ (which for each of us is either Jesus’s 2nd coming or when we die our earthly death), filled with the fruit of His righteousness for the glory and praise of God.”*

3. Finally we hear about **St. John the Baptist** today in the Gospel. The St. John who Jesus said is the greatest man born of woman before the New Testament era of grace, a very holy man, a man of truth and justice. St. John the Baptist has much to teach us about the ways of God, the ways of repentance - of turning back to the Lord and asking humbly for His grace and forgiveness of our sins to change our lives to Godliness instead of sin and evil. St. John the Baptist is the last of the OT prophets and so as all the prophets did, he points the people of his time and for all time in the Gospel, to the Lord Jesus who alone can show us the ultimate meaning and purpose of our life, leading to a living personal relationship with the Blessed Trinity. What **Faith** St. John the Baptist possessed as He fulfilled the words of the Prophet Isaiah, as the Gospel passage notes today. What a good lesson for us: may we humbly approach God as St. John the Baptist did, and ask St. John the Baptist to pray for us this Advent that we will be transformed in Christ and will confess our sins in the Sacrament of Confession, so we can receive the Lamb of God in Holy Communion free of all mortal sin and in a spirit of faith and gratitude. We may very well be in the End of Days; let’s not be spiritually complacent. God is patient because He wants all to be saved and none to perish. May He not find us unprepared when He calls us from this passing earthly life, whenever that day is for each one of us. God bless you.

Recommended Resource:

Bp. Robert Barron’s *Catholicism* series on DVD – a great Catholic evangelization tool for believer and unbeliever alike. See www.wordonfire.org.