

Peace is...hastening the coming of the day of God

Isaiah 40: 3 *"In the desert prepare the way of the Lord!"*

2 Pt 3: 11,12 *"[conduct] yourselves in holiness and devotion,
waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God..."*

Mark 1: 7,8 *"One mightier than I is coming after me... he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*

Reflection:

In the first reading, we are told to *"Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!"* In the time of the prophet Isaiah, when the king was coming, people had to work on the road, filling the potholes and leveling the "bumps," to make the path smoother and quicker. Isaiah exhorts us to "straighten the path," so that we will be ready at the appointed time to receive God and His grace. When we do this as a faith community, God's graces can flow through us to those in need.

In the second reading, St. Peter tells us that *"with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day."* God's time is not our time. *"The Lord does not delay his promise...but he is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* God is so merciful in giving us time to be reconciled with Him. However, we are also told that *"the day of the Lord will come like a thief."* So we need to prepare now and not procrastinate. Peter urges us to conduct ourselves in *"holiness and devotion... eager to be found without spot or blemish before him, at peace."* Let us make this season a "new beginning" in our faith journey, striving toward the goal which St. Peter enjoins on us.

During this busy season of Advent, we ask ourselves if we are going about our preparations only for tradition's sake? This time of expectant waiting upon the Lord is meant to be a time of grace. Perhaps we can trim down our to-do list, as we endeavor to live and be in God's time. However, even in the cooking and cleaning, decorating and shopping, we can be mindful of God's presence and His will. In God's time we work steadily, peacefully, looking for opportunities to serve Him as we experience His presence in others. This way we can offer the smallest or simplest as well as the most difficult tasks to Him. Then even washing the dishes can be a gift to God, and doing them cheerfully becomes an added gift! Waiting patiently on-line or while in line or in traffic become conscientious ways to serve Him, while helping us to become more patient. Thus we can work on being prayerful in everything we do, thereby allowing God to change our hearts a little at a time. This is the way to "live in the world", but not "of the world".

Let us be determined to share the gifts He gives us, especially the gifts of faith, peace, hope, joy, and love that are so much a part of this season!

Action:

- *Participate in the Cluster Penance Service on Monday, December 19th at 7:00 p.m. at SJB*
- *STOP. Take time for prayer: "Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:11 Read Holy Scripture.*
- *Pray together as a family. Go to Mass together.*
- *Reach out to someone who is home-bound or lonely. Pay a visit; make a phone call.*
- *Share your gifts, especially with those who are most in need.*
- *Reconcile with someone with whom you have a conflict or whom you may need to forgive.*
- *Replace an unhealthy habit with a healthy one, giving your spiritual life a boost!*

"He must increase, while I must decrease." ~St. John the Baptist (John 3:30)