

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

How time flies. It is the second Sunday of Advent. As if we just started Advent. And here we are. During this time of the year, or even when the "ber" months began, television commercials, department stores, malls, and conversations have already shifted focus. From ordinary time, all of a sudden, everybody's attention went to Christmas plans - decorations, vacations, gifts and parties.

For some, especially those who have little or nothing at all, the season of Christmas has become another unbearable anxiety.

For them, Advent becomes "a painful waiting period before the reopening of a wound," and a "reminder of their aloneness in this world." Sometimes we forget to stay in the moment of Advent a bit longer and more intentionally, even though it might seem easier to just look ahead.

So here's how to do it, making advent more meaningful as a way to prepare for Christmas.

Let us listen to John the Baptist. He wants our attention and prompts us to prepare in a deeper way. John the Baptist, a man who lived what he preached, did not hold back when he informed everyone present for baptism that their task was to announce Christ by the way they lived. There is no way than to make the season intentional by preparing our heart to be a welcoming place for Jesus -- the announcement of love that is and love to come.

I do extra work for God through my family or community, I take time to repent, from my shortcomings (and the long-comings too), more time to seek to forgive others and myself, and bear good fruit. As we prepare our hearts, we prepare a way for God to enliven and transform us. Preparing a way for God, preparing a welcoming place for Jesus in our heart, demands that we live a life that shows a different and challenging spirit -- of understanding, wisdom, endurance, courage, harmony, truthfulness, authenticity, and reconciliation. Preparing a way for the Lord and making the way straight also means listening to God intentionally and removing the blockages and obstacles which prevent God from coming close to us.

The prophet Isaiah allows for images of the past and the future to inspire our present living. Isaiah desires to inspire our dreams. As one commentary says -- this prophet wants us "to envision peace too: a time when all creatures, from widow to queen, from lion to lamb" to have evolved beyond aggression, sharing what is necessary in order to live in universal peace.