

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT; Cycle - B; Dec. 10th 2023
Is. 40: 1-5, 9-11; 1Pet. 3: 8-14; Mk. 1: 1-8

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

On Dec. 1903, after many attempts, the **Wright Brothers** were successful in getting their 'Flying machine' off the ground. Thrilled by this great achievement they telegraphed this great news to their sister Katherine in Ohio: "We have actually flown 120 feet; we will be home for Christmas." Katherine hurried to the editor of the local news paper and showed him this exciting news. Looking at the telegram he commented, "How nice, the boys will be home for Christmas." He totally missed the greatest news of the century for mankind that man had flown! Perhaps, it is the case of many people, in the hectic process of shopping, wrapping and shipping, they miss the most important point that the reason of their celebration is the coming of God in history. No doubt, on this Christmas Day also a few million children will gather under the Christmas tree, eager to open the gifts even without knowing what Christmas is all about! It is very unfortunate and sad to see people celebrating Christmas without giving Jesus a part in it.

Last Sunday the Evangelist Mark invited us to wait for the coming of the Lord. This Sunday both the first reading and the gospel bring us the good news of the revelation of God in different ways. Prophet Detro-Isaiah (Isaiah-2), who was in Babylonian exile with Israel, brought the good news of the mighty appearance of God to lead people from the exile to the homeland. And the same prophecy was materialized during the time of Isaiah and once again people reached back their homeland. Once the people settled down, eventually the prophetic era came to an end and people were yearning to see and hear another prophet and eventually the day of the Messiah.

Without listening to the proclamation of John the Baptist about the coming of the Messiah, our preparation for Christmas will remain incomplete. When John appeared in the Palestinian desert with fiery prophetic speech, people got excited to see another prophet after waiting more than 450 years. Finally, the voice crying in the desert came back in the person and voice of John the Baptist. **The appearance of John the Baptist itself was good news for the people. For, he appeared as a great prophet. So people never gave much attention to the greatest news he announced about the coming of the Messiah.**

When John came to the scene people were filled with different reactions. Many thought that he was Elijah the Prophet who returned to prepare the way for the Messiah. Indeed, it was the belief of the Jews that before the Messiah would appear Prophet Elijah should come first to prepare the way for the Messiah. Others concluded that John himself

is the Messiah. But John, with all humility made it very clear that neither is he the Messiah nor even a prophet. He considered himself to be the mere voice crying in the desert, declaring the coming of the Messiah and inviting people to welcome him. In other words, John was only a messenger or witness of the Messiah. Unfortunately John's ministry lasted only 3-4 months. We may wonder how successful was the ministry of John? But he came and disappeared according to the plan of God.

As God has chosen you and me in a special way at our Baptism, we are also the messengers or the witnesses of Jesus in the world. We may not be John the Baptist or prophets, but we too have the same role of John in a small scale that **we should proclaim to the world that the savior is among us. Today's world is waiting to hear the cry, 'Do not be afraid, the savior is born for us and he is Emmanuel, God is with us.'** Only we Christians were given that good news and it is our duty to share it with the world.

Today we live in a world of chaos and confusion. The younger generation, the future of mankind, is totally misled for lack of faith in God. The moral degradation has reached its peak. All sorts of violence is culminating. No one is secure anymore; the physical insecurity, economic uncertainty, unhealthy materialism, consumerism and secularism bring down the morale of mankind. More and more people go away from God and seek their security and comforts in the material world; but end up in utter disappointment. Only we Christians can give that hope to the world. Because, Jesus Christ is the only savior of the world and only he could promise his followers that he will be with them till the end of the age. He is still living among us. **In the Acts of the Apostles 4:12 we read St. Peter declaring before the Jewish Sanhedrin, "There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved."** Yes, there is only one name by which we can do everything in the world; there is only one name by which we are protected; there is only one name which is the answer to every problem, and that is the name of Jesus Christ. As Christians we are chosen by Jesus to proclaim this truth to the world.