

Connections

2nd Sunday of Advent, Cycle C

Before looking at the questions below, take some time to read the readings.

See p 19, *A Catechumen's Lectionary*

First Reading: Baruch 5, 1-9

Baruch addresses a sad reality, but also much hope. King Nebuchadnezzar has exiled the inhabitants of Jerusalem, sent them to Babylon, and destroyed their beloved city. Those exiled see it as punishment for being unfaithful to God. Yet Baruch instructs the faithful to “Take off your robe of mourning and misery” and see the glory of God to be revealed. These are not just words of hope for Israel of old. They are also words for us. As they waited in hopeful expectation, so do we anticipate the adventing of God in our times. The transformation offered by the arrival of God in our lives happens within the affairs of human life, of our life, of the here and now. Ours is the acceptable time! Ours is the day of salvation!

Have you experienced hopelessness in your life? Have you experienced difficulties that you thought were insurmountable? Have you experienced salvation from those experiences? Have you experienced the saving power of God? Spend time with these experiences paying attention to the feelings that are conjured up.

Second Reading: Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11

Paul's affection for the Philippians is obvious from this reading. The community that he has shared with them is probably a sharing *in* the faith rather than a sharing *of* the faith in ministerial involvement. His hope is that they will be “pure and blameless for the day of Christ” in anticipation of his Second Coming.

How have you experienced the love of God surrounded by a community? How have you been supported? How have you supported others? How does this journey of faith that you are traveling bring you closer to Jesus?

Gospel: Luke 3:1-6

In these next two Sundays, John the Baptist will be our gospel companion. It is clear from this gospel reading that Luke intends to put the coming of the Christ in historical and political context. John marks the end of the Old Testament prophets and the beginning of the New Testament and the coming of Jesus. Baptism was a Jewish ritual washing that marked a new beginning, a ritual of renouncing sin. And yet, often times the obstacle is not our sin, but rather our inability to forgive ourselves. Perhaps this season is not about waiting for God, but rather God waiting for us to put down the sins in which we have already been forgiven.

How is repentance transformative in you life? How have you experienced repentance?
Are there times in your life for which you had difficulty forgiving yourself?