

THEME: ***A CALL TO REPENTANCE***

Today's Gospel reading presents us with the striking voice of "*one crying in the desert*"—John the Baptist—whose cry is addressed not to a physical desert but to the inner deserts of our own hearts. The message he brings is urgent and clear: "*Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" He announces: "*Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.*" As we await the Lord in joyful expectation, Advent becomes a summons to interior renewal and conversion, for the Lord cannot enter a heart cluttered with sin.

Welcoming God's kingdom requires *metanoia*—repentance. Like the crowds of "*Jerusalem, all Judea, and*

the whole region around the Jordan” who acknowledged their sins and were baptized by John the Baptist, we too must humbly confess our faults, express true contrition, and resolve to amend our lives. Conversion is never merely interior. It must bear visible fruit—fruit of justice, mercy, and renewed relationships. John challenged those who received baptism—“*Produce good fruits as evidence of your repentance*”— thus making clear that conversion must manifest itself in concrete actions.

These “good fruits” echo the prophetic vision of the prophet Isaiah in the First Reading: a community marked by justice, harmony, and protection of the vulnerable, where “...*there will be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain.*” The utopian society prophesied by Isaiah

becomes possible only when hearts are transformed and filled with the knowledge of the Lord. St. Paul reinforces this in the Second Reading, urging believers to “...*think in harmony with one another*” and to “*welcome one another as Christ welcomed you.*” The fruit of true repentance is communion—bridges built where divisions once stood, understanding offered where suspicion once ruled. The Responsorial Psalm, proclaiming that “*justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace,*” reinforces that the Messiah’s coming establishes a kingdom of righteousness and peace—if we prepare our hearts to receive it.

In a time marked by division, hate, violence, and discrimination, especially in our country, Advent calls us

to become instruments of reconciliation and hope. True repentance leads us to build more inclusive and loving communities where all can have a sense of belonging, where enmity gives way to compassion, and where we all can recognize one another as brothers and sisters striving for the common good.

As we journey through this holy season of Advent, we must pause to ask: *What change is God calling me to? What good fruit is He inviting me to bear?* May the Lord fill us with His knowledge so that we may do His will in all things. Amen.