

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate, Herod, Philip, Lysanius, Annas, Caiphas, John, Zechariah...nine names are mentioned in the Gospel proclaimed at Mass today, the Second Sunday of Advent. Strange names. Try putting your name in the list.

Judaea, Galilee, Iturea, Trachonitis, Abilene... the five districts and towns that are also specified. Unfamiliar places? Try substituting them for Woodcliff Lake, Montvale, Hillsdale, Park Ridge, Bergen County.

Name and place. God acts with specific people in definitive geographical locations.

He acts with you and me in our specific life. Our life is a history of salvation.

The Word of God is never abstract, it is never anonymous; it is always addressed to a specific person, in a definitive place. The Gospel we listen to today, the Second Sunday of Advent, makes this evident.

The 'Word of God' did not merely 'come to John the Baptist'. It did so having identified him in the context of a panorama of other people. Our lives also are linked to others. Paul Simon sang "I am a rock; I am an island." But that is simply not true.

The Word addressed to John had consequences for all those who surrounded him: for some it would mean their salvation, for others condemnation.

'Repentance for the forgiveness of sins.' This was the Word addressed to John, and the message he shared. This Word, this message, is also addressed to us this Advent.

Repentance and forgiveness of sins' is probably last on our bucket list of things to do as we prepare for Christmas.

How sad that we do not receive the graces from the Sacrament of Reconciliation more often. What disgrace those months and years pass by without our being healed. Yet this is how the Church invites us to make preparation for the coming of Christ.

We cannot go to confession of our own initiative, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit, but this gift can be desired. A sincere confession has consequences not only for us, but for the panorama of people who come into contact with us. Christ came for the forgiveness of sins. He can only forgive them if we give them to him.

Tree decorated...√

Christmas Shopping...√

Repented and received forgiveness...√

Fr. Sean