

2nd Sunday of Advent [A]

December 7, 2025

Advent is a season of preparation—but not only the kind of preparation that fills our calendars or decorates our homes. In fact, THAT comes a distant second – Advent is **FIRST** and **ALWAYS** a preparation of the heart.

And today, the Church places before us a striking figure to guide us: **John the Baptist**.

John doesn't arrive gently. He comes preaching in the wilderness—a place of silence, a place with a striking absence of comfort. And his message is clear and urgent: *“Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!”*

It's not meant to frighten us but to wake us up. Repentance isn't about fear or shame. It's about **renewal**. It's about clearing away whatever is preventing God from entering more deeply into our lives. John's call out isn't simply to make us feel bad about sin, but to encourage us to change direction—to turn again toward God.

But there's something else just as important in John's message; and John leads us by example – to put humility first

Despite his popularity, despite the crowds, despite being seen as a powerful religious figure, John refuses to put himself at the center. He says plainly: *“One is coming after me who is mightier than me.”* Jesus, **John insists**, is always greater.

John knows his role—and he knows his limits. That, brothers and sisters, is a critical lesson for us today.

We live in a culture that prizes self-sufficiency. From a young age we are taught to be independent, to be capable & strong, to be self-reliant. While these qualities **can be good**, they can quietly lead us to believe that we don't really need God—and lead us to believe faith is optional, that salvation is something we can manage on our own.

John the Baptist stands firmly against that illusion. John's **entire life** points to one truth: **We need a Saviour**. We cannot save ourselves!

This is sometimes difficult for us to accept. Many of us have spent years holding things together, parents holding families together, managing careers, navigating loss, and carrying responsibility. We are used to being strong, and Advent invites us—gently but firmly—**to acknowledge our limits**.

It asks us to admit where we have grown **spiritually complacent**, where **prayer has faded**, where forgiveness has been withheld from others and where habits have become subtly harmful. We must let go of the belief that you can fix everything on your own.

John's message is for us all – Students and young people:

You're surrounded by voices telling you that **your value** depends on what you achieve...on your popularity with others, on your image

Our worth is not earned—**it's given and received** directly from God on the day we are born into this world – FOR ALL OF US!

You are great no matter who you are – and your job – our only job is to work towards being the best version of OURSELVES that we can be

We don't have to become perfect before God loves us – He loves us now.

Jesus comes precisely **because we need Him**.

While John may be giving the religious leaders who are insincere the gears when he says: "Bear fruit worthy of repentance," we're all called to genuine conversion. And conversion by its very nature changes how we live.

It might mean reclaiming time for prayer—even five minutes a day of honest conversation with God.

It may mean returning to confession, especially if it has been too long.

It may mean reconciling with someone from whom you've grown distant from or starting to work on overcoming a bad habit and replacing it with a good one.

It might mean being intentional about choices we make—how we speak to others, how we treat our bodies, what we consume, even what we consume online, or **who** we allow to influence us.

It may mean trusting that God has a plan for us, even when the future feels overwhelming or unclear to us.

John also reminds us that renewal is not a one-time event. The spiritual life requires ongoing preparation. Advent isn't just a countdown to Christmas— it teaches us to notice when God's near and to recognize our constant need for Him in our daily lives.

Finally, John teaches us the freedom of knowing who we are—**and who we are not**.

John isn't the Messiah, and he's clear about that! He decreases so that Jesus may increase – and what a relief the same recognition should be for us.

We're not meant to carry the weight of the world.

We're not meant to save ourselves.

Advent invites us to step back, to humble ourselves, and to allow Jesus to do what only He can do.

As we continue our Advent journey, may we hear John's voice not as condemnation, but as invitation:

- To renew our hearts.
- To prepare with honesty

And to welcome—not a distant God—but a Saviour who comes close because we need Him.

Father Chris' Homilies