

Scripture Readings for the Second Sunday of Advent ~ Year C

1st Reading ~ Baruch 5:1-9

- ❖ In this remarkable passage from the *Book of the Prophet Baruch*, we hear God's promise of comfort and hope. Resplendent images of anticipation and dignity fill the reading. God sees the long hardship of the people and chooses to respond with salvation by offering them a new name and a revelation of the Glory of God, which will shine through them. The people are called to "arise", "stand" and "look" as ready responses to the imminent actions of God. Like the First Sunday of Advent, this prophetic call is not of doom and gloom, but is filled with transforming joy and hope. It is important to focus on the life-giving message that God speaks.

2nd Reading ~ Philippians 1:3-6, 8-11

- ❖ When one is filled with gratitude, one cannot hold back words of thanksgiving and praise. St. Paul writes in gratitude to the early Christian community of Philippi, acknowledging with delight the grace of God that is active and strong within the Church. He encourages the community in these in-between times, as it awaits the Lord's return, to be a discerning people: to know how best to respond to the needs of the world with love, knowledge, and full insight. This right living of the community, in compassion and holiness, becomes a hallmark of belief in the Second Coming: a forward focus on the day of Christ without neglecting the needs of today.

Gospel ~ Luke 3:1-6

- ❖ After a lengthy introduction to the principle authorities and political powers of the day, the *Gospel According to St. Luke* introduces us to a prophet, John, seized by the word of God and on a mission. Last of the prophets, Precursor of the Saviour, John draws our attention from the principalities of this world to the fulfillment of the promise proclaimed by the prophets of long ago: "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." (Luke 3:6) John the Baptist takes up this word, this Good News, and starts pointing us to the Saviour, Jesus Christ. The message he has been entrusted is no less important today as it was two thousand years ago. This Gospel passage situates us in the historical setting which surrounded the first coming of the Lord, and prepares us to celebrate the birth of the Saviour at Christmas. But, its message also helps us to see that preparations for and celebrations of Christmas becomes "an actualization of this first manifestation (the Birth of the Lord) that announces and guarantees what is already on the horizon (the Second Coming of the Lord)."¹

¹ Days of the Lord: The Liturgical Year. Volume 1: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1993), 86.