

## Second Sunday of Advent

My beloved brothers and sisters, many times today, we can find ourselves surrounded by pessimism, discouragement and cynicism, with regard to our society and the Church and ourselves. As we age, we face the reality of our increasing deficits and liabilities. We often experience discouragement in our Spiritual Lives, because it sometimes feels that we are going nowhere, or God doesn't listen, or because we struggle with life-long habits of sin. Often we experience a deep cynicism with our Countries leadership and our Churches leadership. The great temptation today, is to throw in the towel, to just become complacent or even give up the struggle!

Today, in all of the readings, our Good God has something to say to us about this kind of pessimism and cynicism; God says: "pessimism, discouragement and cynicism will all come knocking at the doors of your hearts and minds; but, don't let them in! Don't let yourself be afraid, because I am always with you, I have never forgotten you. The Darkness always comes before the Dawn of the new day's light! Do not give into fear, because I am your Lord and savior, and you are never alone, even when you feel alone!"

In the Gospel, St. John the Baptist's voice still rings out to us from two thousand years ago, with hope in the wilderness of pessimism and the desert of discouragement: **The Lord is coming! Look For Him! Issaiah still preaches a message of comfort to God's people struggling with sin. He constantly reminds us that God is our Shepherd who is gathering His flock in His arms. The second reading reminds us still today, that although it may seem that God is absent from our lives and our times, He has not forgotten about us, nor is He powerless to help us; but, He will indeed send us His grace at the right moment in our lives and in these times! For God, what seems to be a long wait, is really His Divine Providence; He knows when it is time to act decisively in time and in our lives!**

**Advent reminds us that God has never forgotten about us- for we are carved on the palm of His hand, and although a mother could forget about her child, God will never forget about us, regardless of how we may feel. He never stops thinking about us, and in truth, He is always leading us, even through our**

**struggles to a deeper and deeper relationship with Him and His beloved people. It is in our darkest times, that God leads us more and more decisively into a deeper hope, a deeper trust and a deeper faith; in fact, we cannot grow in these essential virtues without these struggles. God has never forgotten about us, and He never will; this is our hope and our courage; our task, is to constantly fill in the valleys, and to constantly struggle to make His ways straight for His Coming into the World, The Church and into our Lives and families!**