

## Second Sunday of Advent, C, 2021

*In the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the papacy of Francis, bishop of Rome, when Antonio Guetterez was secretary General of the United Nations, Ursula von der Layen was president of the European Commission, Archbishop Jose Gomez lead the USCCB and Joseph Biden was president of the United States, the world, plagued by climate change and still reeling from the Covid-19 pandemic wondered where to find hope. – Mary McGlone*

That might be the way Luke would start writing a Gospel for our day. After the infancy narratives, Luke starts over again by placing everything in his story in the context of human history. He wanted his readers to understand just how the story he was about to tell played a roles in the trajectory of human history.

Obviously, Luke would suggest that we too need to read his Gospel in the light of our own religious, social and political context. He would tell us that the state of the world's health and environment, the extremes of war and peace, wealth and poverty, racism and division, social activism, religious devotion, lack of faith and anti-religious activities are the environment to which we must apply the gospel if it is to have meaning for our time.

Luke paints John the Baptist as a prophet, evoking Isaiah's call to level the slopes, straighten the curves and smooth the roads of their lives so that they could encounter God's saving power. He calls us to repentance, using the Greek word, *metanoia*, a combination of the Greek words "beyond" and "mind." It empowers us to look beyond and see the hope lurking beyond ourselves to God's vision of life. He celebrated *metanoia* as an **experience of being freed from guilt (forgiveness) and a ritual washing (baptism) that symbolized entering into new life.**

Sir Francis Bacon said this: **When you're through changing, you're through.** That is true both physically and spiritually, and the end is death. And so Advent time challenges us to take a look at ourselves so that we change to be more and more like Christ, who is our **life** and salvation...heirs of a life that never ends. In the words of Baruch, **God leads us in joy by the light of God's glory, with God's mercy and justice for company.** And that is our call this Advent season, to allow the light of God to empower us to do great things right here, right now. (Cardinal Bernadin)

Historically, after each massive world crises – pandemic or war – there is a resurgence of search for meaning. Religious vocations rise and multitudes turn to God anew as people re-evaluate their lives. Might that be the call our Scriptures offer us during this Advent Season?

The thing about genuine conversion or *metanoia* is that we can't plan it. It is God's offer in a particular moment in history. All we can do is be open to it. Might that be our call this Advent season?

As Paul suggests to the Phillipians: "My prayer is that your love may more and more abound...Learn the things that really matter...(Be) rich in the harvest of justice which Jesus Christ has ripened in you."