2nd Sunday of Advent C

People of Zion,
the Lord will come to save all nations,
and your hearts will exult
to hear his majestic voice.
(cf. Is 30:19.30, Entrance Antiphon)

First Reading   *Baruch 5:1-9*

Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress, put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever, wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you, put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal on your head: since God means to show your splendour to every nation under heaven, since the name God gives you for ever will be, "Peace through integrity, and honour through devotedness." Arise, Jerusalem, stand on the heights and turn your eyes to the east: see your sons reassembled from west and east at the command of the Holy One, jubilant that God has remembered them. Though they left you on foot, with enemies for an escort, now God brings them back to you like royal princes carried back in glory. For God has decreed the flattening of each high mountain, of the everlasting hills, the filling of the valleys to make the ground level so that Israel can walk in safety under the glory of God. And the forests and every fragrant tree will provide shade for Israel at the command of God; for God will guide Israel in joy by the light of his glory with his mercy and integrity for escort.

Second Reading   *Philippians 1:3-6.8-11*

Every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy, remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present. I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes. God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves you. My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your

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knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognise what is best. This will help you to become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the Day of Christ, when you will reach the perfect goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for the glory and praise of God.

Gospel

Luke 3:1-6

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:
A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley will be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, winding ways will be straightened and rough roads made smooth. And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

Meditation

Today's gospel deals with the Baptist, that herald of an extraordinary event. The evangelist reports John's cry raised in the desert. He describes his mission to us: to prepare the way, to make straight the road. After a long silence during which there have been no more signs or prophets, God speaks anew. The echo of his voice rumbles across the solitudes announcing a decisive turning point in the history of the world. In an ultimate intervention which fulfils and overflows the ancient hopes, God will come.
But how? Will he show his presence like a meteor leaving a fiery trail across the lower reaches of the atmosphere before pursuing its course through the starry night? Will we only catch a glimpse, in the space of a flash of lightning, and then fall once again into the darkness which covers the world? No, for this Word which erupts into time changes all human history: "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." But to see him we must first die to ourselves in conversion. That is John's message.
It is in the midst of the discordant voices of history that God makes himself heard. By its life of justice, the community of believers ceaselessly sounds forth the invitation to humanity's new exodus.