

2nd Sunday of Advent "C" 2009

I. If there had been such a thing as a 'newspaper' in 1st century Jerusalem it probably would have looked like this. The feature story on the first page with an accompanying picture would have been about Tiberias Casear, The Emperor. Then there would have been a smaller article, interviewing the new Governor, Pontius Pilate, at his palace on the coast by the Mediterranean. Under "Regional News" would be stories and gossip about Herod and his brother Philip and how they were managing their "ethnarcies"; perhaps about Lysinias in Abilene, wherever that was. In the religion section which focused on the Temple and the High Priest, you'd find stories about Caiaphas, and Annas, the old high priest, who pulled the strings behind the scenes. Maybe something about the Essenes and their strange baptism with water...and maybe one line about John the Baptist preaching on the banks of the lower Jordan.

II. But for St. Luke the whole sequence of events has it backwards. The front page story is that the Word of God came to John the Baptist. The headline is about God calling forth a 'prophet' when most Jews thought prophecy dead! No such thing has happened in centuries.

III. Advent after Advent, we hear John the Baptist's message and there's tendency to put it on "back-burner". But what valley need to be filled; what mountains made low; what paths made straight? What sadness are you hiding from; what mountain is currently to high to scale; what failure hides in the recesses of

your heart? Only one possible solution exists for these trouble, big or small-let God's depths be an intimate part of your soul. Christ is gestating right now in your heart, just as much as He did in Mary's. You have to stretch if He is to be born in you this year, a little more than the past. Are you willing to let your insides pull wider to make room? This is the meaning of Advent-Stretch! Rely on the tender care of God and His Mother. Allow them to tease open a few doors in you that have been shut too long.