

## **Homily – Second Sunday of Advent Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Selma – December 8, 2024**

Dear brothers and sisters; today, the Word of God fills our hearts with a message of hope and renewal. As we journey through this holy time of Advent, preparing for the coming of Jesus, the readings remind us of the transforming power of God’s love and the joy that awaits those who trust in Him.

In the first reading, the prophet Baruch speaks to a people burdened by exile and sorrow. His words are a call to shed the garments of mourning and clothe ourselves with the glory of God. Imagine a people crushed by despair, suddenly invited to lift their heads, and see the dawn of liberation. Baruch assures us that God never forgets His people. Even when it feels like God is silent, His plan for peace and restoration is unfolding.

Like the exiles in Babylon, we sometimes carry the weight of our own struggles – broken relationships, uncertainties, or fears. Yet, God’s promise remains: He will guide us with joy in the light of His glory. Our faith teaches us that God’s silence is not absence; it is the quiet preparation of something greater.

In the second reading, St. Paul shares his confidence in God’s faithfulness. He reminds the Philippians – and us – that the good work God has begun in our lives will be brought to completion. This assurance fills us with joy because God never abandons His work in us. He calls us to respond with love and perseverance, knowing that His grace will sustain us.

Pope Francis reminds us that one manifestation of joy is having a sense of humor. He says: “The Holy Spirit is the one who helps us in this dimension of joy and of good humor.” When a

person maintains a sense of humor, even in the midst of sorrow, we know that the Holy Spirit is at work in that person.

Finally, in the Gospel, John the Baptist prepares the way for the Lord. His call to repentance is not a harsh condemnation, but an invitation to open our hearts to God's salvation. Luke situates John's ministry in the midst of real human history, reminding us that the saving power of God enters the very fabric of our lives. Salvation is not abstract; it is personal, tangible, and universal.

We are invited to embrace God's transforming love and joy by shedding despair, trusting in His faithfulness, and preparing our hearts and lives for the coming of Jesus, who brings salvation into the fabric of our human story. Let us ask ourselves: Where do I need to let go of mourning and embrace God's joy? How can we prepare the way for Jesus in our lives and the lives of others?

Advent is a season of hope, not only for us, but for the entire world. Let us trust in the God who transforms valleys into highways and makes all flesh see His salvation. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, may our hearts be filled with joy as we await the coming of the Lord.