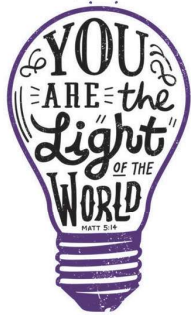


“In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring.”

– Pope Francis



SCRIPTURE
of the DAY

Baruch 5: 1-9
Psalm 125: 1-6
Philippians 1: 3-6, 8-11
Luke 3: 1-6

east and west. Baruch depicts Jerusalem as a mother gathering her children, all the twelve tribes of Israel. He says to Jerusalem, ‘*look up lift up your eyes, arise and see your children coming home not just from the east but from the west.*’

In the Gospel today, we hear the familiar voice of John the Baptist in the wilderness. John, the precursor of Christ, fulfils the prophecy of Isaiah. He comes to *prepare the way of the Lord and makes His paths straight*. The post exilic generation have long been praying for the Messiah to come, and John prepares them by his *proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*. It is sin that has driven them away from their relationship with God in the first place.

What is our takeaway message from scriptures today? Baruch paints a picture of a new Jerusalem, one that is greater than the Jerusalem of the Israelites. One that is clothed with the robe of righteousness and wearing the diadem of God’s glory. It’s the sight of our heavenly kingdom that awaits us. John prepares our hearts for this. When sin dies in us, and we make our paths straight, the Lord himself will embrace our hearts.

We look at the chaotic world today. People being displaced due to conflicts and natural disasters. Corruptions are rampant and cause hardships due to inequality and injustices. Many have a sense of hopelessness and helplessness.

Yet, as Christians we have this sense of hope. St Paul, in encouraging the Philippians is encouraging us too. **We must approach the day of the Lord with confidence**, because the good work that the Lord has begun in us is going to bear the fruit of righteousness. God’s grace is going to bring the work of completion in us.

As we await the coming of Christ, let us continue to bear witness to Him, and be his instruments of love. We echo the Psalmist who says, *the Lord has done great things for us; indeed, we are filled with joy.* ❖

SALT OF THE EARTH AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD

CELEBRATING, LISTENING AND WALKING TOGETHER IN A SPIRIT OF
COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION AND MISSION (MATTHEW 5: 13-16)

MONTHLY FOCUS PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Approach the Day of the Lord With Confidence

As Advent progresses, the penitential mood sets in. Baruch, in the first reading gives a comforting prophecy. The exilic people are at their lowest point. They are lost, scattered and broken. They would have felt that God has abandoned them. The conquerors have them scattered all over the place.

