

Parish of St. Joseph, Morningside
2nd Sunday of Advent, Cycle B

Pulpit Plan		
Theme	:	“Prepare the way of the Lord!”
1 st Reading	:	Isaiah 40:1-5.9-11
Responsorial Psalm	:	Ps 85
2 nd Reading	:	2 Peter 3:8-14
Gospel	:	Mark 1:1-8

- **“Prepare the way of the Lord!”**
- These words were first spoken to a discouraged and dejected group of Jews, exiled in Babylon; with very little hope of ever returning to their beloved homes in Israel!
 - But things were about to change!
- Isaiah’s message is that God’s people will be free to return across the desert to Jerusalem to rebuild their homes and their Temple from the rubble of the Exile!
- Six centuries later, John the Baptist – using Isaiah’s words – **prepares the way of the Lord.**
- Through his preaching and baptising, he calls people to leave the rubble of their lives – rubble caused by sin – and be converted!
- Here and now, in our own time, the same invitation and challenge is spoken: **prepare the way of the Lord!**
- On the second Sunday of Advent, three years ago, when preaching on these same scriptures, I spoke of the many wars around the world; of the scourge of women and child abuse, the horror of abortions and the frightening number of death penalty executions
 - well, three years along, things only seem to have gotten worse!
 - Everything seems to be crumbling around us!
- But, just like in the times of Isaiah and John the Baptist, the words: **prepare the way of the Lord** must be heard!
- St Peter tells us that Christ will come...into the rubble of our lives...
 - **a child is born for us, a son is given to us!**
- This picture of a nativity scene in a Lutheran church in Bethlehem this year **(project picture)** dramatically depicts the destruction, hurt and pain of our time BUT ALSO...
 - The presence of Jesus!
- In the midst of everything – the craziness of our lives – Jesus still comes to be with us!
- During Advent, we are invited to undertake the task of preparing our hearts; of changing our lives and our world in order to welcome Jesus!
- So, instead of asking, “What would we like for Christmas?” perhaps we should be asking, “What needs to change in my life, in my world so that Jesus can enter?”
- If Christ is to be really welcome among us...if his Spirit is to mould ours...if we are to see with his eyes, feel with his heart...we need to change!

- We need to leave the places our sin has exiled us to, and return to God!
- We must be willing to welcome his mercy, forgiveness and promise of renewal and healing...
- We must be willing to let Jesus shape and direct our lives!
- Only a few listened to the Prophet Isaiah and returned to Jerusalem to begin the task of rebuilding their lives from the rubble...the majority stayed behind in Babylon...they did not have the courage to begin again!
- Will we listen to the voice calling us to **prepare the way of the Lord**?
- Will we step out to rebuild or will we stay behind?

