

Second Sunday of Advent

"Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
One more seed is planted there.
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
That in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today:
Love, the Rose, is on the way."

People Look East, vs. 2 by Eleanor Farjeon

*"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way
a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him."*

*And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance
for the forgiveness of sins. Mark 1: 2-4*

Getting ready for special guests, celebrations and events require a lot of thought and preparation. It is crucial to prepare oneself and the setting in advance. In today's readings a flurry of activities are underway as people get ready for the coming of the King! Excitement is in the air! We read that the King is coming with many gifts. Among these are forgiveness, faithfulness, comfort, good fortune and peace. However, in order to be ready for the King and partake in his goodness, certain requisites are essential. Inner cleansing and conversion is fundamental—thus repentance was the hearkening cry of John the Baptist and the prophets.

The good news of salvation is for everyone who will heed the call for repentance and forsake crooked paths. In Israel/Palestine, just as on the first Christmas, many walk in twisted paths and practice injustice. Violence, greed, deception, money and power are used to occupy lands, to segregate peoples, to steal, to kill and to destroy. Before "faithfulness can spring forth from the earth and righteousness can look down from heaven," corrupt paths must be straightened and the mountains of "sin" crumbled. The coming King needs a straight and smooth highway. Today, followers of Jesus can nourish the "seed of righteousness" in Israel/Palestine through standing with the oppressed and through exposing and removing roots of injustice. The flower of peace can then flourish and *Love, the Rose*, will fill the land!

As we light the candle today, Lord Jesus, thank you for coming to bring us forgiveness and salvation. Search our hearts today, reveal to us our wicked ways and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let your kingdom come in our hearts and lives and use us as instruments of peace and justice. Amen

Brenda Awad