

**ICCH**  
**International Catholic Community of Heidelberg**

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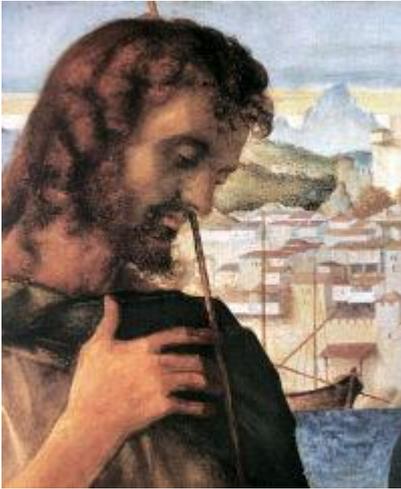
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*December 7, 2014*

*Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:1-5.9-11/2 Peter 3:8-14/Mark 1:1-8*

Welcome Father John

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**



At the very outset, Mark declares his gospel to be the "good news." He dares to say this in a world that is broken and weary because this gospel announces the consistent divine initiative to bring about a new creation where peace and harmony will prevail over pride and violence. This new beginning occurs at the coming of Jesus and easily transcends the original creation in scope and significance. If in fact God's dream for a world of peace and justice has not been fulfilled, it is due entirely to the obstacles which we have placed in its path. Thus, when Mark tells us that the career of John the Baptist was described already in the words of Isaiah (1: 2-3), he is also telling us that opening the road for the coming of the Lord is still a major problem.

The desert is a wild and challenging place, a place that demands attention, for it strips away all that is superfluous in human life. We are still preventing the coming of the Lord by refusing to open ourselves to the radical implications of the message of Jesus. It is for this reason that the baptism of John is called a baptism of repentance. It represents an expression of regret for having refused to accept fully the implications of the coming of the Lord. On the other hand, it has a positive aspect also which is a declaration of personal readiness to make room in our lives for the Lord, however costly that may be. Life Implications One of the major ways in which we prevent the coming of the Lord is our fear that, if we don't focus our attention primarily on our own interests, we will lose control of our lives and be pulled apart by the needs of others.

In fact, Jesus means to choose to commit oneself to live as unselfishly as one's freedom permits...which usually means a little more than we think is possible. This doesn't mean that we should become doormats but it does mean that the needs of others must not be the last and least concern in our lives. In other words, it means to put our lives and our futures into the hands of a gracious God as we strive to make the love and gentleness of Jesus present in our world. All of this may sound like a life of endless self-denial and very little fun or happiness. However, such a conclusion can be reached only by those who have not really tried to live by the wisdom of Jesus. The fact is that those who really care about others are the happiest people on earth. In this Sunday's gospel, John the Baptist urges us to remove the roadblocks of fear and self-centeredness in our lives and thus assure a truly joyous Advent celebration. Demetrius R. Dumm, O.S.B.

*[http://www.saintvincentarchabbey.org/news\\_print?id=2112](http://www.saintvincentarchabbey.org/news_print?id=2112)*

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**NEWS ...**

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- **SOCIAL GATHERING**: Our **social gathering** for this month, which happens to be the last one of the year 2014, takes place on **December 14**.
- **CONFESSIONS**: There will be **confessions** at 12 noon before mass on **December 14**.

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