

Second Sunday of Advent – December 9, 2018

Baruch 5: 1-9 Philippians 1: 4-6, 8-11 Luke 3: 1-6

I must admit that Saint Luke is my kind of writer. As he begins to tell of the ministry of Jesus, he appreciates, as I do, the importance of a little bit of history. As we have heard, he give a list off historical individuals who were important in that part of the world at that time. Tiberius Caesar, Pilate and Herod represented the civil authorities; Annas and Caiphas were part of the religious government. As first announced by John, as we recall today, God entered our world, a real world, a world that has a history. This is what Saint Luke wants us to know.

What, then, are we to understand Saint Luke as wanting those who read what he wrote to do? We are to recognize that he is presenting what is a basic lesson of the Season of Advent. God is coming to be with us in our history, into the story of our lives. All of us have a salvation history, a history of the relationship with God, a relationship, if we are honest, have had its ups and downs through the years. All of us are being called, once again, to respond to this relationship with God within the history of our lives and to reflect our God in our lives and by our lives.

Along with Saint Luke's account, we also heard from the prophet Baruch. He addressed the people of his time, of his history. It was a time when they had experienced a devastating defeat in the destruction of Jerusalem, the center of their

lives. Baruch speaks to them with hope, consolation and encouragement. The defeat will be replaced with the victory of the splendor of God. The hills and valleys will be smoothed out. All obstacles will be removed so that a trusting and confident relationship with God can be achieved. A renewed appreciation of the presence of God with them will fill their lives, their history.

Along with these accounts we hear a passage from Saint Paul's letter to the Christians at Philippi. It is a group that he deeply cherishes because of the admiration he has for their faith and the practice of that faith.



His experience of them, which he reinforces in his writing, shows them to be a people who are confident of God's presence in their history, in their lives. They are living what we are called to anticipate during this time of Advent.

As we hear today of the work of John proclaiming the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, we can be assured that God is truly with us, present to us in the history of our lives. God continues to be with us, not only as a memory of a person in history as was Jesus in his ministry at a time and a place in history, but also in our gathering here in worship, prayer and praise. In the Eucharist that we celebrate and share the presence of God in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ that sustains us, refreshes us and renews us in our individual faith, and in our faith as Church, the present day reflection of that community in Philippi.

We now can go forth into the history of our lives that is today, that is this week to come, bringing down the obstacles that overwhelm us and filling the valleys that hinder us so that we might declare in word and in action our faith and trust in our good and gracious God.