

Pastoral Reflection: Second Sunday of Advent/ Luke 3, 1-6

Our Inner Selves

In the days of old, when a king intended to tour his dominions, he sent couriers to tell the people to prepare the roads. Obviously, when John, quoting Isaiah, said, "Every valley shall be filled,... every mountain and hill shall be made low,... winding roads shall be made straight, ... rough ways made smooth," he was not referring to a physical but to a spiritual preparation that each one must undertake to be able to receive the Lord when He finally comes. Isaiah's "road" metaphors will be of great help to us to make the Season of Advent more meaningful. We can use them as the starting points for a serious examination of conscience as we prepare to receive Jesus in our hearts on Christmas day.

Valleys to be filled. What are our low-lying, swampy areas? Do we stand on solid spiritual grounds? Or are we so down and out that we move from one frustration to another with no hope for the future? Do we live in trust or are we always suspicious of others? Seeing how morally bankrupt we are, do we live in self-pity, saying, "Others just do not care about me" or we just give up on ourselves altogether, saying, "There is nothing I can do to help myself?"

Mountains and hills to be made low. In our homes, do we not give our feelings and opinions the highest priority and refuse to understand those of our parents, spouses or brothers and sisters? When someone gets in trouble specially of his own making, do we not find it very easy to say, "He deserves what he gets!" instead of spending time and effort to help him straighten out his life?

Winding roads to be made straight. When we have a quarrel with someone, do we not find it easier to avoid him or even continue to put him down before others instead of going up to him with respect and effect a reconciliation?

Rough ways to be made smooth. Do we exert effort to be genuinely nice to others or do we rather not care even if our rough ways hurt other people? Do we find ourselves always talking about love but never taking steps to make ourselves a little more lovable?