

## **December 6, 2015 – Second Sunday of Advent**

**Prepared by Father Daniel McLaughlin, MM – Sao Paulo, Brazil**

*Baruch 5:1-9; Psalms 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6; Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11; Luke 3:1-6*

Whether it within the Eucharistic celebrations on Sundays or in gatherings of 6-7 families in private homes during the Advent season, Brazilians see this time of year as a time to prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ. As they reflect together they articulate a clear understanding that salvation is a gift from God and is not something that can be granted by the “official line” – those in power who dominate and oppress.

In the first part of today’s gospel, Luke makes a stark contrast between those who were the political authorities at the time of Christ’s birth and those who were in power. In Luke, chapter 3: 4-5 we are introduced to John the Baptist who presents an alternative plan, a plan that was first presented by Isaiah in Isaiah 40: 3-5. This alternative plan revealed by Isaiah and John the Baptist, demands of us who call ourselves Christian, to prepare the coming of the Savior, by making straight the way of the Lord, and filling in the holes and taking out the curves in the road.

Recently, as the mayoral elections were just beginning, members of the Faith and Politics Pastoral planned a way that they could make these words of John the Baptist real for their current reality. After months of reflecting, the Pastoral developed a plan to help those in authority, in this case those seeking to become mayor, become more aware that Christ’s coming is for the salvation for all.

They invited the mayoral candidates to come and listen to the proposals that the Pastoral created. Each of the proposals they outline around health, education, public transportation, violence, housing and the environment were steps the mayor could take to make the words of Isaiah and John come alive in this area of São Paulo. They were proposals that truly would help to make straight the way of the Lord – leveling the mountains and filling in the “pot-holes.”

“This is voice of him who shouts in the dessert – Prepare the way of the Lord,- make straight His way, - Every valley will be filled,- Every mountain and hill will be leveled, - The curved roads will be made straight, - and the ways filled with potholes will be filled in. And every man and woman will see the salvation of the Lord.