

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEACONS

2nd Sunday Of Advent – Year B Into the Wilderness

Deacon Mark Kelly

Advent 2020 is especially poignant as we yearn both for an end to this harrowing year and for the coming of the Good News with the joy and hope Christmas brings. Mark's Gospel, which is the Gospel for the Church's Year B, is known for being blunt and somewhat abrupt. This Sunday's very beginning (Mk 1:1-8) challenges our comfort and certainty. No Christmas nativity stories in Mark! Just straight into John the Baptist, the wild man living rough in the bush, urging us to get ourselves prepared for the coming of Jesus. That is precisely what Advent is about: penitential preparation and hopeful expectation.

We can feel the excitement pulsing! Christmas is just a few weeks away. School is ending, trees and lights and reindeers are dusted off, holiday plans are firmed up. For some Australians, that is all there is. Christians too are involved in present buying, family arrangements and holiday plans, but for us, Jesus is the "reason for the season." We eagerly anticipate the reliving of God's incarnation as that little baby over 2000 years ago. As preparation we heed John's call and go with him a little into the wilderness, taking time out away from the hustle and bustle, the tinsel and glitz, where God can work on our hearts and we can reflect on what really matters.

In the wilderness, even if it is only five minutes of wilderness at the beginning or end or in the midst of our busy day, we can find the core simplicity of John the Baptist. We make our inner preparations for the Lord and we wait quietly, prayerfully, expectantly with John for the coming of the Lord.