

2nd Sunday of Advent (Year A)

Gospel

Matthew 3:1-12

'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight."'

Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father", for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptise you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

Reflection

Imagine someone like John the Baptist rocking up at your school gate - wild clothes, weird diet, loud voice - calling everyone to change their lives. He wasn't trying to win "Best Dressed" or be popular. He came with a mission: get ready, God is close. Not someday, not when life gets easier - now. John didn't just tell people to say sorry and move on. He challenged them to show their change - bear fruit. In other words: If you're serious about following God, let it be seen in your actions. This hits home for us as Vincentians, because Frédéric Ozanam and St Vincent de Paul didn't just talk about faith- they lived it, choosing love in practical ways even when it was tough.

Just as John the Baptist told people to "prepare the way of the Lord" by changing their lives and bearing good fruit, this activity turns old, forgotten materials into something new and beautiful. It's a reminder that repentance isn't just saying sorry, it's about transforming what we already have into something that brings hope, welcome, and joy.



Materials Needed

- Old bedding and tablecloths (you could ask your local SVP shop or project to donate any bedding or clothing they can't re-sell or pass on)
- Wire wreath frame or a sturdy cardboard circle
- Scissors
- Hot glue gun or fabric glue
- Optional: embellishments (buttons, ribbons etc)
- Optional: twine or wire for hanging

Activity

Prepare the Base: If using a cardboard circle, cut out a large ring from the cardboard (approximately 30-45cm in diameter). If using a wire frame, ensure it is clean and ready for use.

Cut the old bedding and tablecloths into strips. Each strip should be about 5cm wide and 20cm long. Mix and match different fabrics for a colourful look. Take a fabric strip, fold it in half, and place it under the wreath frame (or through the cardboard ring). Pull the ends of the strip through the loop and pull tight to secure it. Repeat this process, filling the frame or ring with tightly knotted strips until it's fully covered.

Layer and Texture: Alternate the fabric colours and patterns to create a layered, textured effect. You can also vary the lengths of the fabric strips for added visual interest. Once the wreath base is complete, embellish it with buttons, or other decorative items. Use the hot glue gun or fabric glue to secure these items in place.

Create a hanging mechanism by attaching a piece of twine or wire to the top of the wreath for hanging. Make a loop and secure it with glue or by tying it tightly.

Call to Action

Now that you've transformed something ordinary into something beautiful, don't let it stop there - gift your wreath to someone who needs a reminder that they are seen, valued, and not forgotten. Choose a neighbour, a family member, someone who's struggling, or someone who's inspired you, and let your wreath be more than decoration - let it be a quiet act of love that prepares the way for hope.