

2nd Sunday of Advent
Message Series #2

The second and third Sundays of Advent always focus on John the Baptist. Did you know that John and Jesus were cousins? Did you know that John had a large group of disciples, a couple of them future apostles of Jesus? Did you know that John baptized Jesus? Did you know that God called John from his mother's womb to prepare the way for the ministry of Jesus? The gospel today reminds us of that calling to prepare.

On this second Sunday of our Advent message series I would like to focus on "preparing the way for Metro Mel." Once again this weekend we heard the description of Metro Mel. What can you do to help me and the parish staff prepare a welcoming and receptive environment for Mel here at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish? We will be a better parish with Mel.

The scripture commentator, Verna Holyhead uses the image of "highway repair" to understand our role in preparing a way for Metro Mel. We need to remove any "potholes" that might prevent Mel from becoming a member of the parish. We need to move on from being just mere onlookers at a construction site to being active participants in smoothing and preparing the way for Metro Mel. We can't do this alone, we need the grace of God that comes from praying and learning (the first two characteristics of discipleship).

Let me give some examples of how we can prepare the way for Metro Mel:

First, we can create a welcoming atmosphere for Metro Mel. This begins by having greeters at the front door of the church. Volunteer to be a greeter. When you enter the church if there are not at least two greeters at the front doors, volunteer to help. If I am a greeter, volunteer to take my place since I have other things I can do to prepare for mass.

Sit in the middle of the pew rather than just on the end allowing those who come after you to mass to find a place to sit. Welcome people who sit with you. Sit in different places in church to get know other people.

Second, clean restrooms make our parish an attractive place to worship. We need help in “tidying them up” after each mass. It is a matter of picking up paper on the floor and cleaning the counter tops.

Third, we have the custom of providing food and drink after each mass. Most parishes don’t do this. Come to Seton Hall, share food and drink with others, build community. However, we are short of people to set-up and clean-up.

Fourth, there will be a lot of Metro Mels showing up for Christmas mass, especially the 5 pm mass on Christmas Eve. Instead of taking up space here in church go to Seton Hall for mass letting Metro Mel worship here in this space. Let Mel experience what many of us have experienced on Christmas Eve.

Fifth, fully participate in mass by singing and joining in the responses. Show Mel that mass means something to you.

Kelli is our full-time ministry coordinator. She can sign-you-up for the ministries I just mentioned as well as other ministries that focus on Mel. Contact information for her can be found at the information desk in the gathering area or on our parish website.

The future of this parish depends not just upon me and the parish staff but also on each one of you here today. We need to remove the “potholes” that prevent Mel from joining us. Are you willing to move from being just an onlooker to a participant, from being just a consumer to a minister?

