

***Third Sunday of Advent***  
***December 11, 2022***  
***Year of Saint Joseph***

*“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.” (Matthew 3:3)*

My dear family, last weekend I offered a first answer to the statement of Saint John the Baptist for one *to make straight the way of the Lord*. I began by reminding all of us that no one person can attempt to do this by themselves. Left to our own devices, we often miss the mark of living as a Christian should. Our actions betray what our lips so often profess. As an example, I used the prayer of Saint Philip Neri who would arise from his bed each morning, praying these words: “O Lord, keep thy hand this day over Philip; if Thou does not, Philip will betray Thee.” I would like, this day, to profess a second thought of how we can make straight the way of the Lord as we prepare for Christmas. The second thought—**Have Confidence in God**.

Saint Francis de Sales once said: “The more we distrust our own strength, the more we should confide in the divine mercy [of God].” This is so very true, for Sacred Scripture is filled with verses of praise and thanksgiving; all instructing the listener to have faith in God. Psalm 4:3 – “*The Lord hears when I call to him.*” Psalm 9:9-10 – “*The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. And those who know thy name put their trust in thee, for thou, O Lord, hast not forsaken those who seek thee.*” Also the very beautiful Psalm 23, to place before you some of the many, many examples I could offer.

There are those in society who would ask that we produce other evidence, outside of Sacred Scripture, to prove this. I respond with the entire history of our Catholic Church as proof that God is present with us. Some would want us to hide or cover up the blemishes of our past and not acknowledge the failures of the present. I cannot do this; for these marks bear witness that He is with us and guiding us. This is in spite of a history replete with flawed leaders. Our history is gloriously filled with both saints and sinners, with moments filled with atrocities and moments which stirred mankind to greater heights. The untrained, contemporary historians of social media, thinking themselves avant-garde will regurgitate the fashionable, trending ideas someone told them concerning the Catholic Church. Yet, when one considers the age of the Catholic Church, one realizes how foolish this endeavor is. The Church has stood before these and will be standing after these same individuals have been lain to rest. Our history proclaims God’s enduring presence and affirms our trusting confidence that He will be with us throughout, until the end.

However strong this proposal may seem, I offer one last point which, I hope will be convincing enough. And that point is – YOU. I hereby state that you are the single most important reason to have confidence in God. How often have we begged God’s divine assistance as we sat despairing over some situation completely out of our control? I am not referring to the famous prayers of: “O God, help me pass this test that I may or may not have

studied enough for.” No, I am referring to those moments at the bedside of someone taking their final breaths, the hard conversations when the Doctor gives our test results, standing at a grave where a parent buries their child, seeing the red eyes of someone who has cried and cried helplessly unable to change a situation. No, my family, I have full confidence in God for I have seen Him there, at those moments, in His children assisting each other. God cares so much for each one of you that He will inspire one of His children to be there at your side, consoling and comforting as best they can, because He Loves YOU. In fact, as often as you have been the recipient of the kindness of others, you too have been His voice, His hands, His presence to others. It may not be the miraculous way we envision our prayers being answered. It is the most natural way our prayers are answered. God invites You to play a part in mankind’s redemption. It may only be one note in His great orchestra, but it is your note and the symphony would be amiss if your note was not played well.