

## DECEMBER 19 2025 DEACON JOHN BROWN

Traditionally, we prepare for the coming of our Lord during the season of Advent. In today's gospel, we hear the prophecy about John the Baptist—how he was destined to help prepare the people of his time for the arrival of the Lord.

The prophecy said:

John will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah, he will go before the Lord to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

So, are we prepared for the Lord?

Our Christian faith calls us to live with respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Pope Francis warned us years ago that polarization and exclusion were growing and often seen as the only way to resolve conflicts. He reminded us how quickly strangers—immigrants, refugees—are treated as threats, as enemies, simply because they come from far away, have different customs, speak another language, or hold a different faith.

He feared that this “virus” of polarization and animosity could quietly shape how we think, feel, and act toward others. And often, those we perceive as enemies are the most defenseless—their voices silenced by what he called “a growing pathology of indifference.”

His plea was simple: we need to care. We need to bring God's message of love, tenderness, and compassion to the entire human family. This is how we prepare for the Lord during Advent—by embracing humility,

courage, mercy, righteousness, purity of heart, and peace-making, as taught in the Beatitudes.

We don't need radical changes. We just need to show, through our words and actions, that we are proud of our faith and our belief in God. Advent is a time to work harder at this—to be better at it.