

When I was a young kid, I used to like to look at the world from upside-down. I would lay on my back on the bed, and then slide myself down the side headfirst, and when I was all situated, I would look around at things.

When I was a slightly bigger kid, I would hang upside-down from the monkey-bars on the playground, and look around to see how things looked.

I would try to suspend my judgment, and see if I could convince myself that somehow a rug had gotten on the ceiling, or that the sky was really covered in grass and the ground was blue with clouds.

If I succeeded, even a little bit, it was sort of cool. Almost like I had discovered a totally new world somewhere, without having to go anywhere.

Inevitably, someone would walk into my world, usually my dad or my mom, and I would try to remember which way was up and which way was down. They would say something like, "Stop that, you'll make yourself sick," or "You're messing up your bed," or another kid would want his turn on the monkey bars.

And I would flip back over and return to the regular world, leaving behind, for a time, the new world I had discovered.

In the Prophecy of Baruch, we hear the whole of Jerusalem being told to rise up, "stand up on the heights..." to "look to the east and see" the restoration of the children of Israel.

That was good news for its time, because during Baruch's lifetime, all of Israel was taken off to Babylon.

Baruch gives a further prophecy that,

*... God has commanded  
that every lofty mountain be made low,  
and that the age-old depths and gorges  
be filled to level ground,  
that Israel may advance secure in the glory of God.*

In Baruch's prophecy, God is making a way for His people to move forward into His Glory.

We hear a similar prophecy repeated in the Gospel where we hear that,

*Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight his paths.  
Every valley shall be filled  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low.  
The winding roads shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth,  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*

The subtle difference here is that in the second prophecy, the way is made straight for the coming of God.

The Gospel earlier tells us about John the Baptizer who is going around  
*proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins*

The word *repentance* in the Greek is a compound of *meta* a prefix meaning 'to go beyond,' or to 'go above;' and *nous* which is the Greek word for mind. It can be translated as *repentance* or perhaps even better as to '*change your mind*' or to '*go beyond your thinking.*'

While John's baptism wasn't our Sacrament of Baptism, it was a foreshadowing of it that called his followers to look at things in a new way.

Finally, St. Paul speaks of how he desires to see his listeners'  
*love ... increase ever more and more  
in knowledge and every kind of perception,  
to discern what is of value*

And here he is using a word for Divine Love, and what he's desiring is more than just an increase, but an overflowing of this Divine Love in a knowledge of Divine Things, and in discernment and all perception ... our own discernment of God's call, and our own perception of God.

This week, let us reflect on where is our own perception of God ... and our relationship to Him ... And reflect upon those things that are "of value" to us spiritually. Are there any low places that we need to fill in with a little more of the Divine Things or Divine Love? Are there any high places where we may need to be leveled out?

Maybe we need to change our minds about something, or go beyond our current way of thinking ... repent, as it says in the Gospel ... so that we can grow in God's love, as well as our knowledge of God and acquire a new perception of God in our day-to-day walk with Him.

Then every day, as we move closer to the end of the Advent Season, we can heed the admonition of the Prophet Baruch, the Prophet Isaiah, and John the Baptist - to make ready the way of the Lord in our lives and in our own hearts ... to prepare for the birth of Jesus Christ ... and a totally new reality in Christ ... within ourselves ... in our own lives ... in our own worlds ... right where we already are.