

Highways for Our God

2nd Sunday of Advent (Year B)

December 6, 2020

Fr. Tony Davis

Each one of us has our own set of obstacles to face. Some of us will overcome them with ease, some will need to put more effort into struggling with them, some will barely make it through them, and some sadly will be defeated by them. Obstacles are part of being human.

Our readings this second weekend of Advent tell us that our faith can help us through our obstacles. Where there are too many ups, downs, bends, and curves, in our lives, faith wants to break through and make a highway for our God. As the prophet Isaiah said, “every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low; the rugged land shall be made a plain, the rough country, a broad valley.” This was also the message of John the Baptist, who came to prepare the way of the Lord. Our faith clears our path and makes it more manageable to travel. Yes, obstacles will still be present, but they will no longer be impossible to overcome.

As people of faith, even though we have our own obstacles to deal with, we are called to help others through their obstacles as well. We are invited to create highways for our God to reach other people in order to make their paths more manageable to travel. The first step in helping others through their obstacles is to be non-judgmental, even if some of their obstacles are of their own making. That was how Jesus approached sinners and others in need during his ministry. In reality, we may discover that many obstacles in people’s lives are not intentionally of their own making, but are the result of external circumstances, a few

bad decisions that have now taken on a life of their own, or a lack of opportunities and options.

The Jesuit priest, Fr. Gregory Boyle, who works with gang members in Los Angeles, said this: “quite possibly, the ultimate measure of health in any community might well reside in our ability to stand in awe at what folks have to carry rather than in judgment at how they carry it.” (*Barking to the Choir*, 51) In this one statement, Fr. Greg challenges all of us to see others in a new light. He reminds us that some people carry more burdens and are faced with more obstacles than meets the eye. By being non-judgmental, we become a healthy, supportive community.

We should help each other turn our obstacle courses into highways for our God.

Is my life more like an obstacle course or a highway right now? Do I create more obstacles for other people? Whose path can I help clear to make more manageable.

This Advent, may we prepare the way of the Lord and make straight his paths.