

*In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight."' St Matthew 3:1-3.*

The landscape of the Judean wilderness is a stark one, things stand out against the vast expanse of the sky: a rock here, scrub there - a perspective that throws the features of the terrain into sharp focus. The landscape of the wilderness matches the preaching of St John the Baptist. His message is to repent, a call to his hearers to examine the perspectives in which they are living and to reach for a newer and better one. 'Everything that we've been waiting for is about to come', he's saying, 'but that is going to demand a change in your behaviour and a reordering of your priorities, so get yourself ready and make straight the way of the Lord.'

To put our lives in their proper perspective is the call of Advent. How have you been seeing things in their starkness over the past few months? The pandemic has recalled us to the things that are really important in our lives; we've seen who it is that we've really depended on during this crisis - the care workers, shelf-stackers, refuse-collectors and so on; and we've see the toll on those members of our society who are materially poor. Have you noticed? As we chart a course to rebuild society we need to hold on to this larger vision and renewed perspective.