

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

YEAR C

### PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Loving Lord,  
you want the whole world  
to welcome Jesus.  
Give us the strength  
to avoid doing what is wrong,  
and instead,  
through our kindness  
and love for other people,  
make his way easy and gentle.  
We make this prayer to you  
through him,  
who lives with you  
and the Holy Spirit  
forever and ever.

### FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The focus of the first reading is the good news of salvation to the people who were in exile in Babylon. This salvation was very real for them. It meant, literally, that they were coming home to Jerusalem. Baruch tells us that it is because of God's justice and mercy that the people are saved. Their salvation is expressed by "wearing" justice, peace and the glory of God. In other words, it is these qualities that show we are saved.

In our Gospel reading, John the Baptist calls us to change our lives so our sins will be forgiven. In so doing, we prepare the way for God. God's way is the way of justice, of equality. This justice is symbolized in Isaiah's prophecy that "Every valley will be filled in and every mountain will be made small...." Both readings use beautiful, symbolic language to speak of God's justice.

*God comes with love and justice!  
Prepare the way!*

### FIRST READING: *Baruch 5:1-9*

*A reading from the prophet Baruch.*

People of Jerusalem,  
take off your clothes of sorrow and suffering;  
put on the beauty of God's glory;  
put on the robe of God's justice.  
Wear on your head a crown  
with the name of God on it.  
For God will show all the world  
how beautiful you are.  
Everyone will know you  
because of your justice and peace,  
and because of the honor you give to God.  
Rise up, people of Jerusalem!  
Stand on the mountain top.  
Look to the east and to the west  
and see the people coming home in joy.  
Enemies took them away from their home,  
but God will bring them back  
with justice and mercy.  
They are coming home in joy,  
led by the light of God's glory.

*The Word of the Lord.*

### RESPONSE: *Psalm 80*

1st time: Leader; 2nd time: All

God of hope bring us back, let your face shine on us. face shine on us.

Leader: All:

Shine on us and we shall be saved. Shine on us and we shall be saved.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Pre - pare! He's com-ing! The one who will give  
peace to the world is com-ing! Pre - pare! He's  
com-ing! The reign of God is near!  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! "The reign of God is near."

\*After Gospel, repeat Acclamation from here.

## GOSPEL: *Luke 3:1-6*

*A reading from the Gospel of Luke.*

There was a man named John,  
who was the son of Zechariah.  
While John was living in the desert,  
God spoke to him  
and told him to preach to the people.  
So John went around  
the whole area of the Jordan River  
telling everyone to change their lives  
and to be baptized,  
so that their sins would be forgiven.

The prophet Isaiah  
had already written about this  
a long time ago when he said,

"In the desert  
there is the voice of a herald proclaiming:

'Prepare the way for the coming of God!  
Make a straight path for the coming of God!  
Every valley will be filled in  
and every mountain and hill  
will be made small,  
the crooked roads will be made straight  
and the rough land will be made smooth.  
And all people on earth  
will see the saving power of our God.' "

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

This Sunday we might encourage the children to imagine themselves in the role of Baruch. (Cf. *Reflecting on the Readings* for last Sunday.) Because we have John the Baptist both this Sunday and next Sunday, we will take the first reading this Sunday and John the Baptist next Sunday.

For the Old Testament prophecies of redemption to be understood, we need to imagine a people in captivity with little hope of seeing their homeland again. That is not easy for children who have rarely been away from home without their parents.

Try to help the children imagine people in a similar situation. The current events of the day may be used—perhaps, "missing children" or "prisoners of war." The children have probably heard on T.V. or in school, talk of people being held hostage. Explore that with them. Ask questions similar to these:

- What does hostage mean?
- What have you heard about it?
- How do you think a hostage feels in the beginning? after awhile? after a long time?
- How do you think their family back home feels?
- What might it be like to be a hostage for a long time?
- Have you ever seen on T.V. the release of hostages? How do you think they feel when they meet their families?
- Now, if you were the person who had the joy of telling people who were hostages that they are free and are going home, what might you say to them? (Give time for this.)

After the children have had time to "speak the good news," remind them that the Hebrew people—the people of the Old Testament—were hostages in Babylon for a long, long time. They too felt discouraged and wanted to go home to Jerusalem. After setting the stage for them to imagine the Hebrew people in captivity, read the first reading again.

Simply remind the children that the Gospel speaks of John the Baptist who came to tell the people that a Savior was coming to save them. At Jesus' time, the people were not hostages in another country, but were "hostages of sin." Jesus would free them from that.

