

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

YEAR A

### PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Forgiving God,  
help us prepare  
for your coming by being sorry  
for what we have done wrong.  
Fill us with your power  
so that we may know you  
and love you more and more,  
and let all the world  
live in peace.

We ask you to do this  
through our friend and brother,  
Jesus Christ, who lives forever.

### FOCUS ON READINGS:

Last Sunday we were urged to watch for the second coming of Christ. This Sunday, as well as next Sunday, the readings focus our attention on the present and move us toward the theme of the Incarnation on the last Sunday of Advent.

In the first reading, Isaiah presents the qualities hoped for with each new king in the line of David. He tells us of one who is coming to fulfill these ideals. He will bring peace and justice, and he will judge everyone fairly because he will be anointed by the Spirit of God.

John the Baptist speaks of one who is to come who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. He is preparing the people for the ministry of Jesus; the acceptance of Jesus requires that they change their lives.

### FIRST READING: *Isaiah 11:1-10*

*This is a reading from the prophet Isaiah.*

This is what the prophet Isaiah said to the people of Israel.

“A child will be born  
in the family of Jesse.  
This child will be filled  
with the Spirit of God,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of strength and truth,  
the spirit of knowledge and love of God.  
The one who is coming  
will not judge by what others say  
or by what people look like  
but will judge the poor  
with justice and fairness.  
Then the wolf will live with the lamb.  
The leopard and the goat  
will eat together.  
The bear and the lion will be at peace,  
and a little child will lead them all.  
This child will be a sign for all the world.  
Then no one will hurt others anymore  
because everyone will know God.”

*The Word of the Lord.*

### RESPONSE: *Psalm 72*

RESPONSE:

For all that you do we wor - ship you,  
wor - ship you, we wor - ship you. For wor - ship you

VERSES:

1. You will bring jus - tice and peace. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. You save the weak and the poor. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. We praise the good that you do. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. Peo - ple will know of your name. \_\_\_\_\_

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

Change your lives, he's com-ing. The one who will bap-  
tize with the Ho - ly Spir - it. Change your lives, 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: *Matthew 3:1-12*

*This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

When John the Baptist  
went to the desert to preach,  
he always said to the people,

"Change your lives!  
The reign of God is near!"

Long ago, Isaiah, the prophet,  
was talking about John the Baptist  
when he said,

"There is someone in the desert  
who is proclaiming,

'Prepare the way for the coming of God!'"

John wore clothes  
that were made of camel's hair,  
and he wore a leather belt around his waist,  
and he ate locusts and wild honey.

Many people went to the desert  
to see John and confess their sins.  
John baptized them in the Jordan River  
and told them,

"I am baptizing you in water  
to change your lives.  
But someone is coming after me  
who is more powerful than I am.  
He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Isaiah uses images of various animals living together in harmony to depict the peace that will be realized with the coming of the Messiah.

These images will, naturally, appeal to children. You might want to ask them questions such as:

- What happens when you leave a cat alone in a room with a goldfish?
- Would you leave a tiny puppy alone with a wolf?
- What do you think the prophet Isaiah was trying to tell us when he said that a wolf and lamb would get along? Or that a leopard and a goat will eat together and a bear and a lion will be friendly? Do these animals usually get along well together? What do you think Isaiah meant by using these examples? Isaiah tells us that someone is coming to bring this kind of peace. Why will this child be able to bring peace and justice? What special help will he have? (You may want to reread the section from the first reading which describes the Spirit of God.)

Help the children see that Isaiah reminds us that God wants us to live in justice and peace and not to hurt one another. It is with God's Spirit that we are able to bring about justice and peace in the world. Remind the children that because we are baptized, we, too, have the Spirit of God and can make good and right decisions that will help us live in peace. Help the children see that John the Baptist came to encourage people to change their lives — to live more justly — to prepare for the coming of Jesus.

Discuss with them ways that we can truly change our own lives as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus.