

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

YEAR B

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 OF THE READINGS:

Our God is coming! Prepare the way! Change your lives!

The people of Israel were in exile in Babylon. In their understanding, this was the punishment for their sin. Our reading focuses on their liberation from their exile. It speaks of the "herald of good news" who will be the voice proclaiming "Your God is coming, in power and justice, to save you. Prepare the way!" Israel uses symbolic language: every valley and mountain shall be level. This image tells us that with the coming of our God, justice will reign, all will be equal. Our Gospel passage introduces John the Baptist whose role is to announce the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus. He calls us to prepare the way for the one who will baptize in the Holy Spirit, by repenting and changing our lives. John the Baptist calls us to conversion—now!

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11*

This is a reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Our God says:

"Give comfort to my people.
Speak tenderly to the people of Jerusalem
and tell them that their punishment is over."

A voice proclaims:

"Prepare the way for the coming of our God!
In the desert,
make a straight path for our God!
Every valley will be filled in.
Every mountain and hill will be made small.
The rough and rugged land
will be made smooth.
Then the glory of God
will be seen by all the people,
for our God has spoken!"

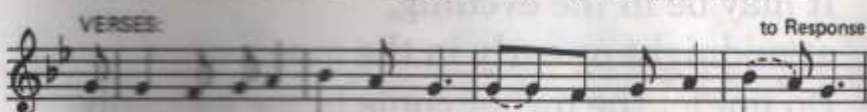
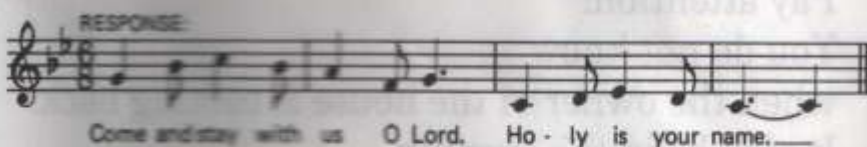
Our God says:

"Go up on a high mountain,
O herald of good news,
and say to the people,

'Here is your God!
Our God is coming in power,
to rule with strength,
and to bring reward and justice to all.'"

This is the Word of God.

RESPONSE: *Psalm 84*



1. For all your people you bring peace. Now sal - va - tion comes for us.
2. You come with justice; be with us. As you have promised: Save us.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



GOSPEL: Mark 1:1-8

This is a reading from the Gospel of Mark.

This is the beginning
of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
Isaiah, the prophet, wrote:

"I am sending my messenger
to prepare the way for you.
He will proclaim,

"Prepare the way for the coming of God!
Make a straight path for our God!" "

And so, John the Baptizer came,
telling everyone to change their lives
and be baptized
so their sins would be forgiven.

Many people around Jerusalem
went to the desert to see John.
They confessed their sins,
and were baptized in the Jordan River.

John wore clothes
made from the hair of camels,
and he wore a leather belt around his waist.
He ate locusts and wild honey.

When he preached, he always said,

"Someone else is coming after me,
He is more powerful than I am.
I am not even worthy to undo his sandals.
I am baptizing you in water,
but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit."

This is the Good News of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Help the children come to know
John the Baptist and his role in
salvation history. What was his
message? What is the "good news"
that he announced? What did he say
about Jesus?

Help the children see that we are
called now, during Advent, to change
our lives in order to prepare to
celebrate the Lord's coming. How
can we change our lives? It is
important that the children focus on
their own lives rather than on
changes needed in the world at large.
Children are not responsible for the
problems of the world and have very
little to do with the solutions to
them. They should see that what
they can do in their families, schools,
neighborhoods, and so forth, is
important. Help the children see
that because they have been baptized
in the Holy Spirit, they too are
heralds of good news for others. God
has promised a time when people will
know justice and all will be treated
equally. ("Every valley will be filled
in. Every mountain and hill will be
made small. The rough and rugged
land will be made smooth.") How can
we help that come to be? How can
we help bring about justice around
us? Help the children see that God
calls us to treat all persons politely.
Children will readily see the
possibilities of this in their own lives.

Finally, assure the children of
God's great love for us. Even when
we have sinned, God sends words of
comfort. God always comes to us
with mercy and good news.