

THE LORD'S DAY AT HOME



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (B)
Sunday 6th December 2020

If you are housebound or self-isolating at this time, please use these prayers to unite yourself with the worship of the Universal Church, and your own Parish this Sunday. If alone, read or say these prayers quietly to yourself. If with another, or in a family, someone should read the "leader" parts, and others respond. It might be suitable to find a special, quiet place at home for your Sunday prayers.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

A: O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

Sign of the Cross

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A: Amen.

Introduction

L: We know that Advent is a season of preparation, of watching and waiting: but today John the Baptist reminds us exactly what we are preparing for: Jesus. Jesus comes to us in a three-fold way: in his incarnation and birth at Bethlehem, in majesty at the end of time, and day by day through prayer and the sacraments. While we can be sure that we know how to prepare for the celebration of his birth, let us ask for guidance to prepare the "way of the Lord" who comes at the end of time and this very day. Let us pray that our longing may be deepened, and begin our prayers this second Sunday of Advent by asking for the help of his forgiveness:

Penitential Act

L: Lord Jesus, you came to gather the nations into the peace of God's kingdom. Lord, have mercy.

A: Lord, have mercy.

L: You come in word and in sacrament to strengthen us and make us holy. Christ, have mercy.

A: Christ, have mercy.

L: You will come again in glory with salvation for your people. Lord, have mercy.

A: Lord, have mercy.

L: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

A: Amen.

Opening Prayer

L: Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son, but may our learning of heavenly wisdom gain us admittance to his company. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

A: Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Gospel Reading

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah: "Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight." and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

A: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Reflection

Cribs – or Mangers or Nativity Scenes – comes in all shapes, styles and sizes, from the tiniest that can be contained in a matchbox to life size versions in Cathedrals and public squares. But though they are all different, they all have the same "cast": Mary and Joseph, the baby,

one or more shepherd with assorted sheep, an ox and an ass, and probably three wise men with at least one camel. One figure that you are *not* likely to see in a nativity scene is John the Baptist. Now while this is entirely understandable (since he was only a six-month-old baby himself when Jesus was born) we welcome John the Baptist into our Advent journey this week and next. Every year he fills up two Sundays so close to Christmas! He is calling us to recognise something important: Christmas is not just the birth of a baby, but the birth in the flesh of the One who is to come – the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, the one who baptises with fire. There are many people who will gaze at a crib this season and feel sweet and moving thoughts at the baby born in such circumstances – but are we willing to look where John points, and see beyond the baby to the mighty God of heaven who empties himself for us? And if we can glimpse that, what must we do to prepare *his* ways, to make *his* paths straight?

For our Younger Friends

John the Baptist is a bit of an odd character! Look back at today's Gospel story and see what we can learn about him: he lived in the desert, rather than in a nice house or comfortable town. He wore weird clothes – camel skins! And let's not even begin to talk about his diet – locusts and wild honey? Sound like "I'm a Celebrity...!" And yet, did you hear how loads of people went to see him, owned up to their sins and were baptised? He must have been something very special! He must have been VERY convincing!

So what was he asking people to do? To straighten out their lives for God. Have you noticed that people take short cuts across public land – if there isn't a path, there soon will be, made by the feet of all the people who don't want to walk round

“the long way.” Getting ready for Jesus means we have to take the direct route, the short cut, the straight path. No wandering round, getting distracted by other things, no detours to more interesting places. No, we want to get to Jesus, we want the straight path! Perhaps you could draw a map of your way to Jesus: it might have your baptism, your first communion, your Church on it; it might have family, friends, priests, teachers, other who help keep the path straight. And you can also draw all the distractions – side roads that lead away from Jesus to other things, like selfishness and laziness and greed. See if you can be a modern John the Baptist – not in your clothes or your diet, but in helping others find the straight way to Jesus!

If gathering as a family, perhaps now continue to discuss what this Gospel passage means to you. If alone, think about what key message you take from the Scriptures today.

Profession of Faith

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Intercessions

- L: John the Baptist was the messenger who prepared the way of Jesus. We too, as baptized disciples of the Lord, are called to be messengers of the way of Jesus. Let us offer our prayers to the Lord, that he may confirm us in his ways.
- L: For the Church, that she may faithfully prepare the way for the Lord's return in glory. Lord, in your mercy:
A: Hear our prayer.

L: For civic leaders, that they may respect and honour all those they govern. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

L: For the outcasts of our society and those in prison, that they may not be forgotten. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

L: For all our beloved dead, that they may know eternal light, rest and peace. Lord, in your mercy:

A: Hear our prayer.

Please add your own prayers for the needs of the Church, the world and your local community. You may wish to add particular prayers for family members, friends or neighbours in need at this time.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

L: At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

A: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

L: Be pleased, O Lord, with our humble prayers and offerings, and, since we have no merits to plead our cause, come, we pray, to our rescue with the protection of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

Before Spiritual Communion

L: Loving Father, your Son assumed at his first coming the lowliness of human flesh, and so fulfilled the design you formed long ago, and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, that, when he comes again in glory and majesty and all is at last made manifest, we who watch for that day may inherit the great promise in which now we dare to hope. At the Last Supper he showed the fullness of your love, as he gave his Body and Blood for his people. Even though we are not in Church, and not able to receive communion today, we open our minds and hearts now to your generous love and the gift of Jesus your Son, welcoming him spiritually into our lives.

Spiritual Communion

A: My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.

Pause for a moment of silent prayer and reflection.

Thanksgiving Psalm

L: Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.

A: Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.

L: I will hear what the Lord God has to say,

a voice that speaks of peace, peace for his people.

His help is near for those who fear him and his glory will dwell in our land.

A: Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.

L: Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth

and justice look down from heaven.

A: Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.

L: The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit. Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps.

A: Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

Final Prayer and Blessing

L: Let us pray.

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, through our partaking in this mystery, you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and hold firm to the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

L: May the Lord ✠ bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

A: Amen.

L: Let us bless the Lord!

A: Thanks be to God!