



AMDG
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT
YEAR A
8TH DECEMBER 2019



**Prepare for the coming of Jesus
through repentance.**

OPENING PRAYER

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 admittance to his company.

As we take another step into Advent, the *First Reading* introduces one of the main themes of this period of the year: Peace. Isaiah paints a picture of the whole world, of people and animals living together in harmony, led by a King who has all the qualities to rule justly.

The *Psalms*, too, speaks of this hope for peace and justice for all.

St Paul, when he writes to the Romans, also mentions the hope which can be found in Scripture. All the more reason, then, for us to be tolerant of one another, so we can all give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*Second Reading*)

In this week's *Gospel*, John the Baptist appears by the River Jordan to entreat people to repent and prepare a way for the one who is to come. He tells them that being a son or daughter of Abraham will not be enough to be sure of being saved. There is no room for complacency. They are to repent; to change their way of life.

Mindful of this week's readings and the Opening Prayer of the Mass, I can perhaps look around me and, whether by word or deed, encourage others to join me as I set out in haste to meet Jesus this Christmas.

FIRST READING ISAIAH 11: 1–4A, 5, 6, 9B (part)

A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse,
a scion thrusts from his roots:
on him the spirit of the Lord rests,
a spirit of wisdom and insight,
a spirit of counsel and power,
a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.
He does not judge by appearances,
he gives no verdict on hearsay,
but judges the wretched with integrity,
and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land.
The wolf lives with the lamb,
the panther lies down with the kid,
calf and lion cub feed together,
with a little boy to lead them.
They do no hurt, no harm, on all my holy mountain,
for the country is filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters swell the sea.

As I prepare to celebrate the Lord's coming, I am grateful to find a few moments to spend with him. Wherever I am, I acknowledge his presence, and tell him about my mood and why I feel the need to be with him today.

When I have found some inner quiet, I spend a few moments reading this familiar text.

What strikes me particularly today?

Maybe there is a word or expression I haven't 'heard' before?

I tell the Lord about it.

I read of the attributes of this perfect King, on whom the spirit of the Lord rests. Who comes to mind, particularly in this Advent period?

Maybe there are people around me, or people that I know, who have many of these qualities? I give thanks for them.

The picture of a world where there is no hurt or harm may challenge me.

In what ways can I contribute to make it a little more real?

What words or actions would help?

I speak to the Lord and I listen to him.

Slowly, I bring my prayer to a close *In the name of the Father ...*

GOSPEL MATTHEW 3: 1–11 (part)

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.’ This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist and his food was locusts and wild honey.

Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the River Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, ‘Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you repent, produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, “We have Abraham for our father,” because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’

Whether I have the luxury of a prayer space, or whether I need to snatch a few moments of prayer on the way home from work, on the bus, the train or in the car, I read this text several times to become really familiar with it so I can then put it aside. What are you going to tell me today, Lord?

I may want to imagine I am by the River Jordan, with the followers of John the Baptist. I look at him; I listen to him and reflect.

John calls me to repentance ... that is, to a radical change of path, so I can become aware of my dependence on God.

Where do I need to change within myself ...
in my dealings with my family, or my colleagues?

Perhaps I find myself among the Pharisees and Sadducees.

How do I feel when John addresses us? Maybe I see in myself some of the complacency that John objects to.

I ponder, and then tell the Lord what is in my heart. He knows, he understands.

As I wait for the One who follows John, I look ahead.

What can I tell him of my desire to be of service to others, to help bring about a better world?

When I am ready, taking my time, I close my prayer, thanking the Lord in my own words for being with me today.

Here's a text if you've only got a minute ...

He does not judge by appearances.

First Reading

He will have pity on the weak.

Psalm

Everything that was written long ago in the Scriptures was meant to teach us something about hope ... be tolerant with each other.

... Christ became the servant.

Second Reading

This week's texts if you want to reflect further

Isaiah 11: 1–10; Psalm 71 (72); Romans 15: 4–9; Matthew 3: 1–12

Alexander Ivanov (1837–1857),
The Appearance of Christ before the People (detail)



‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand ...’



ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH
IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

JESUIT
Ministries



Prepared by St Beuno's Outreach in the Diocese of Wrexham

LDS