



**AMDG**  
**SECOND SUNDAY OF**  
**ADVENT**  
**YEAR B**  
**10TH DECEMBER 2017**



**Prepare a way for the Lord!**

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 us admittance into his company.

The readings this week invite us to prepare for the coming of the Lord Jesus into our lives and our hearts, both at Christmas and every day.

The *First Reading* from Isaiah speaks of the God who wants to console his people; who comes to change the landscape of our lives with power and tenderness.

God speaks in a voice of peace, offering mercy, faithfulness and justice. Wherever God is present, there will be peace for all (*Psalm*).

St Peter (*Second Reading*) reminds us that God's time is not our own. While patiently waiting and longing for God to bring to completion all that he promises us, we are called to try to live holy lives, to live at peace with ourselves and others.

The coming of Jesus is announced by a messenger, John the Baptist, who prepares the way for the Lord as Isaiah foretold. His witness to the truth changes the lives of those who hear what he has to say (*Gospel*).

In this time of Advent, we ask the Lord to free us from all that would hinder our following him more closely, so that we too might be messengers of the Good News for others.

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 40: 1–5, 9–11 (part)

‘**C**onsole my people, console them,’ says your God.  
‘Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her  
that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for ...  
A voice cries, ‘Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord.  
Make a straight highway for our God across the desert.  
Let every valley be filled in,  
every mountain and hill be laid low,  
let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley;  
then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed  
and all mankind shall see it;  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’  
Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion.  
Shout with a loud voice ... Shout without fear ...  
‘Here is your God.’  
Here is the Lord coming with power ...  
He is like a shepherd feeding his flock,  
gathering lambs in his arms,  
holding them against his breast  
and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

This reading reminds us that when we come to pray, it is always as a response to God’s calling. I take time to be still in the presence of my God whose first desire is to console.

Slowly, I read the scripture passage line by line, noticing which words or phrases resonate with me.

I pause for a time, whenever I am moved, and speak to the Lord.

Which images of God appeal to me as I pray?

Consolation, rest, forgiveness, glory, power, tenderness ... or ...?

I share with the Lord and listen for what he might have to say to me.

I may like to ponder – who has been a messenger of God for me?

When and where was this important?

With gratitude, I recall God’s unique communication with me through them.

When I am ready, I end my prayer slowly ...

*Come, Lord Jesus ...*

## GOSPEL: MARK 1: 1-8

**T**he 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 messengers 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 Judea 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.'

As I come to pray, I find some stillness before God in whichever way is best for me. Perhaps I light a candle to remind me of the presence of Jesus, who comes as the light of God into our world.

Mark introduces us to the 'Good News' about Jesus. As I read the beginning of his Gospel, I may like to pray using one (or more) of the following suggestions:

What has the Good News of Jesus meant for me in my life?

I ponder, sharing my thoughts and feelings with the Lord.

John's lifestyle and words draw people to listen to him.

How might I be a messenger, preparing a way for the Lord in the hearts and minds of those with whom I come in contact?

I listen to what the Lord might say to me and ask for whatever grace I need.

I may want to beg for the gift of the Holy Spirit, filling me and guiding me to follow Jesus even more faithfully in my daily life.

I end my prayer by speaking to the Lord from my heart;

perhaps I remain in stillness before him for a while ...

*Come, Lord Jesus ...*

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

Arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God. *Communion Antiphon*

So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace. *Second Reading*

Mercy and faithfulness have met;  
justice and peace have embraced ...  
Justice shall march before him  
and peace shall follow his steps. *Psalm*

*This week's texts if you'd like to reflect further:  
Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-11; Psalm 84 (85); 2 Peter 3: 8-14; Mark 1: 1-8*



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JESUIT  
Ministries



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