



AMDG  
SECOND SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT  
YEAR C  
9TH DECEMBER 2018



**What marvels the Lord worked for us!  
Indeed we were glad!**

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 to his company.

The beginning of the Church's New Year, the Season of Advent, is a good time to look back as well as forward. We begin our prayer in the present moment with God, but we are not the same people as we were a year ago. Our journey of life with God has changed us, sometimes in surprising ways.

We may be able to sing with the *Psalmist* of the marvels of God, our hearts filled with laughter and gladness. Or it may be that our experience has been one of tears and, like the exiled Israelites, we need the words of encouragement from the *First Reading* to remind us that sorrow can be transformed by God into joy.

St Paul (*Second Reading*) remembers the faithfulness of the Philippians and prays that they may continue to grow in holiness and knowledge of God. We, too, might pray to have their faithfulness and to continue to grow in the love of God during the coming year.

John the Baptist hears the word of God in the wilderness and emerges to proclaim our Lord's coming (*Gospel*). His promises are anchored in a particular moment of history.

Here, in our own time and place, we listen to God's word knowing that we, too, are invited to "Prepare a way for the Lord" in our own lives and in our world.

## SECOND READING PHILIPPIANS 1: 3–6, 8–11

**E**very time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy, remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present. I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes. God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves you. My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more, and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognise what is best. This will help you to become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the Day of Christ, when you will reach the perfect goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for the glory and praise of God.

As I come to pray, I may be aware of the pressures of the practical preparations for Christmas that surround me at this time. I try to set aside these concerns to become still in God's presence in whatever way is best for me. I can trust that God longs to speak words of comfort and consolation to me in my prayer.

After a while, I turn to St Paul's words. I may like to imagine that I have received this wonderful letter from Paul, my teacher and guide. I hold it in my hands and read slowly, taking my time. Paul is praying for me and wants to encourage me.

I notice the words or phrases that seem to resonate.

I share my thoughts and feelings with the Lord.

I may recall with gratitude those times and places where I have been able to share the "Good News", perhaps in small ways. It may help me to remember those who have shared with me, perhaps more in deeds than words.

I ponder and give thanks.

I may notice areas in my life where I want to ask for a greater love, an increase in knowledge of what is good, a deeper perception or purity of heart ... or...?

I ask for whatever grace I need.

Paul prays that the love that all friends in the Lord Jesus have for each other may increase more and more. Who are my companions in Christ?

I may like to "pray with joy" for them.

I end my prayer in "glory and praise of God".

*Glory be ...*

## GOSPEL LUKE 3: 1–6

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice cries in the wilderness:  
Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.  
Every valley will be filled in,  
every mountain and hill be laid low,  
winding ways will be straightened  
and rough roads made smooth.  
And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.”

I try to become still in God's presence by consciously setting aside the things that have occupied me today and will take my time later, placing them in God's hands for this time of prayer. He knows and loves me – he will take care of my concerns for now.

I rest for a while in his presence. Then I read the Gospel.

The word of God comes personally to John the Baptist at a particular historical time, one that is clearly described by Luke in the opening lines of this Gospel.

I reflect for a time on my own personal faith history, recalling the people, places and events that have shaped me.

I ponder. I share with God.

I listen to John's proclamation: his message is for us too.

What do I need to let go of, to change, in order to allow God more fully into my life?

I speak of my thoughts and feelings with God or Jesus as I would with a close friend, knowing that he always accepts me, forgives me and loves me.

I ask for what I need.

I end my prayer slowly, giving thanks.

*Our Father ...*

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

Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight ...  
and all mankind shall see the salvation of God..

*Gospel*

The name God gives you forever will be,  
"Peace through integrity, and honour through devotedness".

*First Reading*

My prayer is that your love for each other  
may increase more and more ...

*Second Reading*

*This week's texts if you want to reflect further:*

*Baruch 5: 1-9; Psalm 125 (126); Philippians 1: 3-6, 8-11; Luke 3: 1-6*



The valleys filled, the hills laid low,  
the winding roads straightened and smooth:  
And all shall see the salvation of God.



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