

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Source of All Kindness

Father of all comfort and consolation,
in this holy season,
as you speak tenderly to us,
teach us to speak tenderly to
the hopeless
with acts of care and service.
Make us heralds of your Good News
preparing your way with just deeds
and repentant hearts
that answer the call of John the Baptist.
May your Church be a sign of your love,
ready for the Lord who is to come,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

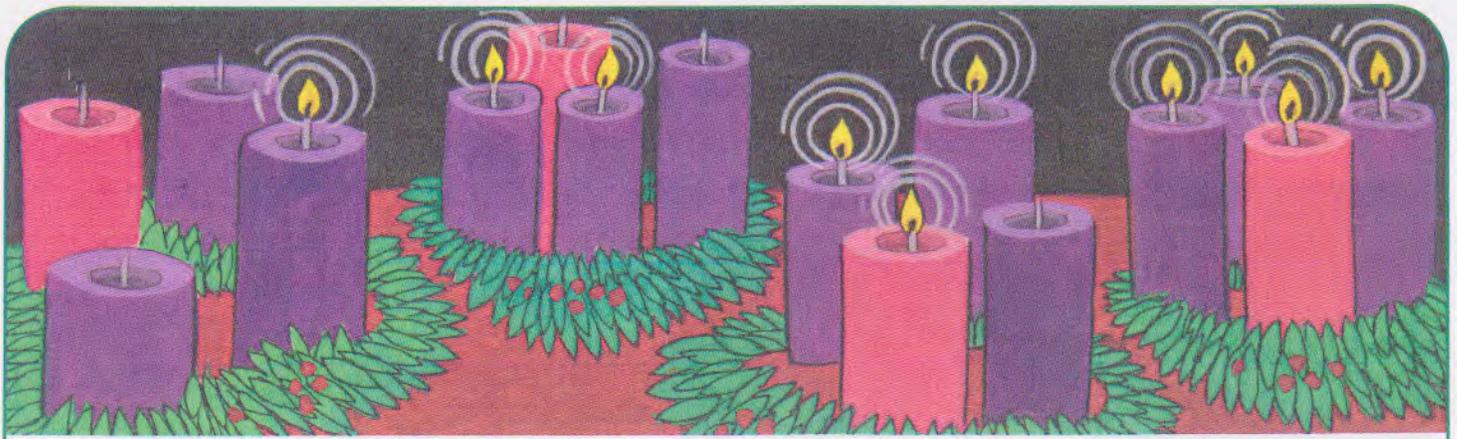
Sunday, December 7, 2014
Prepare the Way of the Lord

Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:1–5, 9–11; Psalm 85:9–10, 11–12, 13–14; 2 Peter 3:8–14; Mark 1:1–8. In today's readings, the Gospel echoes the reading from Isaiah. John the Baptist is the messenger crying out for people to prepare for the Lord. We see that John has completely centered his life on his mission to ready the people for the Messiah. He has only one aim: to point the way to the Lord through repentance. He makes no claim for himself, asserting that he is not worthy to loosen the man's sandals. For nourishment, he only takes in locusts and honey.

The message that John delivers is the "good tidings" to which Isaiah refers. The Savior is coming, John cries out from the desert, as the prophet predicted. But why does God send the Savior? Isaiah tells us that the Savior is coming because God "will feed his flock like a shepherd." God is

merciful and seeks to gather his lambs. When the Savior comes, God's glory will be revealed, and as Isaiah says, "all people shall see it together."

This concept of "all people" appears to be as central to today's readings as repentance. Peter insists that the Lord wants "all to come to repentance." The Lord does not want one of his lambs left to stray. It is obvious that God calls and saves us as a people. The prophet Isaiah cried out to the nation, and John the Baptist did likewise. The Church continues to call to the People of God to live, as Peter states, in "holiness and godliness." During this Advent, how will you repent to form your life into one of holiness and devotion? The Church gives us this time to strive to be, as Peter says, "without spot or blemish."



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 8, 2014

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Today we celebrate the Patronal Feast day of the United States of America. Mary's faith and model of discipleship could be honored in many ways today. A simple way might be to place flowers by an image of her. Pope John Paul II referred to the "school of Mary." Consider what Mary's "yes" to God can teach about courage in answering God's call in our lives. Today's Readings: Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38.

Tuesday, December 9, 2014

St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin

Juan Diego's indigenous name was *Cuauhtlatoatzin*, which means "talking eagle." Juan Diego referred to himself as "a nobody . . . a small rope, a tiny ladder, the tail end, a leaf." Yet the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared to him with a message to raise up the downtrodden. That God has raised the lowly is proclaimed in the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55). Consider praying daily over this text, from Luke's account of the Gospel, during Advent. Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 96:1-2, 3 and 10ac, 11-12, 13; Matthew 18:12-14.

Wednesday, December 10, 2014

Come to Me

In today's Gospel Jesus says, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). In the sections of Handel's *Messiah* leading up to Christ's birth is the oratorio "Comfort ye." There we hear words of consolation and solace proclaimed through the ages. You might want to consider listening to this or other music that might lead you to a spirit of contemplation as we prepare the way of the Lord who comes to comfort us. Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:25-31; Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 and 10; Matthew 11:28-30.

Thursday, December 11, 2014

Optional Memorial St. Damasus I, Pope

Pope Damasus was a patron/sponsor of St. Jerome, whose Latin translation of the Scripture (the Vulgate) was declared eleven centuries later as the official translation of the Bible. In today's Gospel, Jesus says to the crowds, "Let anyone with ears listen!" (Matthew 11:15). We are called to listen attentively to the Word of God. It is easier to listen to the Word at Mass if we have read it beforehand. You might want to plan to make time to read the Scriptures for Sunday a day beforehand. Today's Readings: Isaiah 41:13-20; Psalm 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab; Matthew 11:11-15.

Friday, December 12, 2014

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Today we celebrate the feast of the Mother of the Americas, as Pope John Paul II called Our Lady of Guadalupe. A young Native American maiden dressed as an Aztec princess appeared at the hill of Tepeyac to a poor local man, St. Juan Diego, on December 9, 1531. To honor Our Lady of Guadalupe, you might want to place an image of her near the Advent wreath. Pray for the day when all will be afforded the dignity due them as a child of God. Today's Readings: Zechariah 2:14-17; Psalm: Judith 13:18bcde, 19; Luke 1:26-38.

Saturday, December 13, 2014

St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr

In the year 304, this young Christian woman refused to renounce her faith during the persecution by the Emperor Diocletian and was martyred. Today, countless women and men have given their lives defending the Christian faith. Consider searching for stories of modern-day martyrs, such as Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, lay missionary Jean Donovan, and Maryknoll Sisters Maura Clarke and Ita Ford, who were abducted and martyred in El Salvador on December 2, 1980. Pray for those who suffer persecution or face a martyr's death. Today's Readings: Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Psalm 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13.



© Liturgy Training Publications. 1-800-933-1800. Written by Michael R. Prendergast. Illustrated by Cody F. Miller. Scripture quotations are from *The New Revised Standard Version Bible: Catholic Edition*, copyright © 1993 and 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Permission to publish granted by the Archdiocese of Chicago on March 12, 2014.

Keeping the Seasons

Reproducibles for Advent-Christmas 2014-2015