

SECOND SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT

YEAR B

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Forgiving God,  
help us prepare  
for your coming  
by being sorry for  
what we have done wrong.  
Fill us with your power  
so that we may know you  
and love you more and more,  
and let all the world  
live in peace.  
We ask you to do this  
through our friend  
and brother,  
Jesus Christ,  
who lives forever.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

Our God is coming! Prepare the way! Change your lives!

The people of Israel were in exile in Babylon. In their understanding, this was the punishment for their sin. Our reading focuses on their liberation from their exile. It speaks of the "herald of good news" who will be the voice proclaiming, "Your God is coming, in power and justice, to save you. Prepare the way!" Isaiah uses symbolic language—every valley and mountain shall be level. This image tells us that, with the coming of our God, justice will reign, and all will be equal. Our Gospel passage introduces John the Baptist whose role is to announce the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus. To prepare the way for the one who will baptize in the Holy Spirit, John the Baptist calls us to repent and change our lives. He calls us to conversion—now!

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-10*

*This is a reading from the prophet Isaiah.*

Our God says:

"Give comfort to my people.  
Speak tenderly to the people of Jerusalem  
and tell them that their punishment is over."

A voice proclaims:

"Prepare the way for the coming of our God!  
In the desert,  
make a straight path for our God!  
Every valley will be filled in.  
Every mountain and hill will be made small.  
The rough and rugged land  
will be made smooth.  
Then the glory of God  
will be seen by all the people,  
for our God has spoken!"

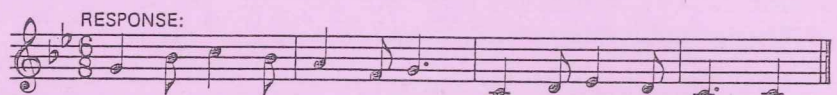
Our God says,

"Go up on a high mountain,  
O herald of good news,  
and say to the people,

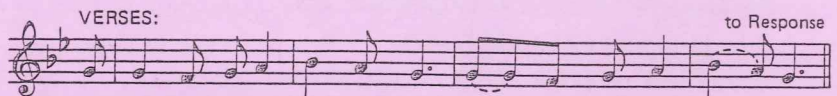
'Here is your God!  
Our God is coming in power  
to rule with strength  
and to bring reward and justice to all.' "

*The Word of the Lord.*

RESPONSE: *Psalm 85*



Come and stay with us O Lord. Ho - ly is your name. —



1. For all your peo-ple you bring peace. Now \_ sal - va - tion comes for us.
2. You come with jus-tice; be with us. As you have prom-ised: Save \_ us.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

(clap)  
Change your lives, he's com-ing. The one who will bap-  
tize with the Ho - ly Spir - it. Change your lives, he's  
com-ing. The Lord is com-ing soon!  
Al-le - lu - ia, a - le - lu - ia! "The Lord is com-ing soon."

## GOSPEL: *Mark 1:1-8*

*This is a reading from the Gospel of Mark.*

This is the beginning  
of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.  
Isaiah, the prophet, wrote,

"I am sending my messenger  
to prepare the way for you.  
He will proclaim,

'Prepare the way for the coming of God!  
Make a straight path for our God!'"

And so, John the Baptizer came,  
telling everyone to change their lives and be baptized  
so their sins would be forgiven.

Many people around Jerusalem  
went to the desert to see John.  
They confessed their sins  
and were baptized in the Jordan River.

John wore clothes made from the hair of camels,  
and he wore a leather belt around his waist.  
He ate locusts and wild honey.

When he preached, he always said,

"Someone else is coming after me.  
He is more powerful than I am.  
I am not even worthy to undo his sandals.  
I am baptizing you in water,  
but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

What did you hear?

Help the children come to know John the Baptist and his role in salvation history. What was his message? What is the "good news" that he announced? What did he say about Jesus?

Help the children see that we are called now, during Advent, to change our lives in order to prepare to celebrate the Lord's coming. How can we change our lives? It is important that the children focus on their own lives rather than on changes needed in the world at large. Children are not responsible for the problems of the world and have very little to do with the solutions to them. They should see that what they can do in their families, schools, neighborhoods, and so forth, is important. Help the children see that, because they have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, they too are heralds of good news for others. God has promised a time when people will know justice and all will be treated equally. ("Every valley will be filled in. Every mountain and hill will be made small. The rough and rugged land will be made smooth.") How can we help that come to be? How can we help bring about justice around us? Help the children see that God calls us to treat all persons politely. Children will readily see the possibilities of this in their own lives.

Finally, assure the children of God's great love for us. Even when we have sinned, God sends words of comfort. God always comes to us with mercy and good news.