

Sunday Message

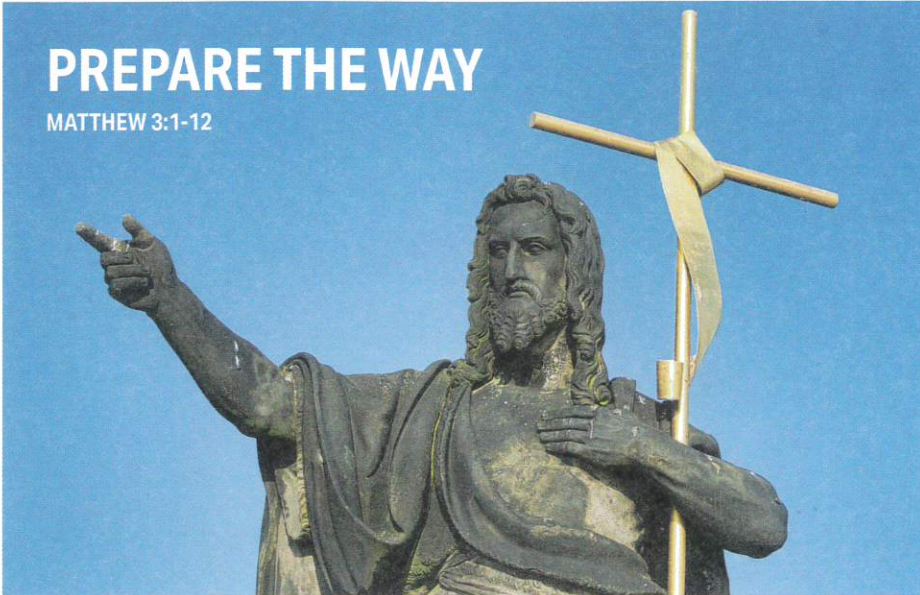
2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE WORD

Year A • 7 December 2025 • Psalter Week 2

PREPARE THE WAY

MATTHEW 3:1-12



In today's passage, we meet John the Baptist, who is presented as the one preparing the way for Jesus. John's appearance and lifestyle – wearing camel's hair and eating locusts – highlight his role as a prophet, calling the people to repentance. His message is simple but powerful: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is not just a call to feel sorry for past mistakes, but an invitation to change direction and prepare for the coming of the Lord.

John's baptism is a symbol of this repentance, a sign of turning away from sin and returning to God. However, he warns those who come for baptism not to rely on their heritage or status. "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance," he says, meaning true change must show in one's actions, not just words.

John also points to someone greater who will come after him, referring to Jesus. He speaks of Jesus baptising with the Holy Spirit and fire – a sign of purification and judgement. John's words remind us that the time to prepare for Christ's coming is now, and we must make sure our hearts are ready to receive Him. ■



DO

Take one concrete step this week – whether it's reaching out to forgive someone, letting go of a bad habit, or committing to a daily act of kindness. This simple practice helps live out John's call to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance."



LEARN

"Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1431

REFLECT

John the Baptist appears in the wilderness, crying out: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand." His words are not gentle suggestions – they're a challenge. He is calling people to change direction, to turn back to God with sincerity.

Remarkably, the people come. They leave the safety of their towns and walk into the desert. They confess their sins and are baptised. There's a deep hunger here – a recognition that something in their lives needs to be made right.

But John doesn't speak softly to everyone. He warns the Pharisees and Sadducees not to rely on their heritage or status. Being from Abraham's family isn't enough. "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance," he says. Faith must show itself in the way we live.

This passage is read during Advent because it's a season of preparation – not just for celebrating Christmas, but for welcoming Christ into our lives again. John reminds us that preparation is not just lighting candles or singing carols. It begins with the heart.

Repentance is not about guilt – it's about grace. It's the grace of a new beginning, a fresh start. The Lord is near. He comes not to condemn, but to renew. ■

SAY

Lord, help me to see where I need to change,
Give me the courage to turn back to you,
And the grace to live with a renewed heart.
Amen.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*O people of Sion, behold,
the Lord will come to save the nations,
and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard
in the joy of your heart.*

COLLECT

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.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING Isaiah 11:1-10

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

On that day: There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

In that day the root of Jesse,
who shall stand as a signal for the peoples –
of him shall the nations enquire,
and his resting-place shall be glorious.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 72(71):1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17. R. cf. 7

R: In his days shall justice flourish, and great peace for ever.

- O God, give your judgement to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice,
and your poor in right judgement. **R.**
- In his days justice shall flourish,
and great peace till the moon is no more.
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the River to the bounds of the earth. **R.**
- For he shall rescue the needy when they cry,
the poor who have no one to help.
He will have pity on the weak and the needy,
and save the lives of the needy. **R.**
- May his name endure for ever,
his name continue like the sun.
Every tribe shall be blest in him,
all nations shall call him blessed. **R.**

SECOND READING Romans 15:4-9

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters: Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, 'Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL Luke 3:4, 6

R: Alleluia, Alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight;
all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

R: Alleluia.

GOSPEL Matthew 3:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,

'The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight."

Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father", for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

'I baptise you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased, O Lord, with our humble prayers and offerings,
and, since we have no merits to plead our cause,
come, we pray, to our rescue
with the protection of your mercy.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights,
and behold the joy which comes to you from God.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment,
we humbly beseech you, O Lord,
that, through our partaking in this mystery,
you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth
and hold firm to the things of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**