

# Read

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Psalm 85:9-10, 11-12,  
13-14

2 Peter 3:8-14

Mark 1:1-8

## LIVING THE WORD

### Second Sunday of Advent

December 6, 2020



#### REFLECTION

The Gospel of Mark begins with John the Baptist announcing the coming of Jesus and the need to prepare, to repent (seek forgiveness), and to be baptized. This announcement was a big deal because the Jewish people had been waiting hundreds of years for a messiah to come. It makes sense that the Church gives us this reading during Advent because we, too, are in need of repentance and conversion, turning away from sin so that we can welcome Christ with open hearts when he comes. Baptism cleanses us from sin and incorporates us into the Body of Christ. To prepare ourselves for Christ's coming, we should reconcile with those we are upset with and seek forgiveness for the things we have done that have hurt others. Asking for forgiveness and offering forgiveness will help our spirit be ready to celebrate a new beginning at Christmas.



#### ACTION

This week, write a letter to someone in your life who you want to reconcile with, either asking for forgiveness for yourself or granting forgiveness to someone you have been withholding it from. In your letter, you can tell this person some reasons why you are seeking this reconciliation. It might also be good to include some of your own reflections on why Advent is an appropriate time to do so. You can wrap your letter in a gift box and give it to this person as a gift.



**“Are you angry with someone? Pray for that person. That is what Christian love is.”**

—Pope Francis (@Pontifex)

#### ? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How do the sacraments help you prepare for Christ's coming?
- ❖ What are some ways you can point others to Christ?



December 6, 2020

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### LECTIONARY #5B

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Psalms 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14

2 Peter 3:8-14

Mark 1:1-8

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

In today's Gospel reading, we hear how John the Baptist helped God's people draw closer to the Lord. Although it is different from John's baptism, the Sacrament of Baptism also draws people closer to God. Baptism is the first sacrament of the Christian life. Through it, we are rooted in the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ. We are made children of God and are called to serve God throughout our lives. We are drawn ever closer to God as we continue to participate in the other sacraments and point others to Christ by our Christian witness.

**Q FOCUS:** *Baptism roots us in Christ and inspires us to lead others to him.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week we observe two Marian feasts. The first, on December 8 is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is a holyday of obligation. A full session for this solemnity is included, beginning on page 79. The second Marian feast is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas (December 12). This feast celebrates the appearance of the Blessed Virgin Mary to St. Juan Diego, whose memorial we celebrate on December 9. In Juan Diego, we see a striking example of humility and faith in an unpretentious man. The Blessed Mother asked Juan Diego, a poor peasant, to tell the bishop to build a church to honor her appearance in his land. The bishop would not

believe this claim without a sign, so the Blessed Mother filled Juan Diego's cloak with roses and an image of her with the likeness of an Aztec woman. This feast also reminds us that the Good News is for all peoples.

### Church Teaching Connection

"For, having been incorporated into Christ through Baptism, they are formed into the People of God, and, having received the remission of all their sins and been rescued from the power of darkness, they are brought to the status of adopted sons and daughters, being made a new creation by water and the Holy Spirit. Hence they are called, and indeed are, children of God" (*Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, 2).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

Mark 1:1-8

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: / *Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; / he will prepare your way. / A voice of one crying out in the desert: / "Prepare the way of the Lord, / make straight his paths."* John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

### ► What does it mean to be baptized?

John the Baptist baptized the people who wished to prepare their hearts for God—his followers were acknowledging their sin and repenting from it. Even though we hear John saying that the baptism he gave is different from the one Jesus will give (the one we received), there are similarities. As baptized Christians, we too are called to acknowledge our sin and to repent of our own wrongdoing. Part of our mission is to examine our hearts and minds and move away from sin and toward holiness. Every human being has a heart that craves union with its Creator. John's mission spoke to the people as their hearts reached and searched for the Lord. His baptism gave people a substantial way to mark their commitment to renewal in God's mercy.

► We are only baptized once; through it we are made members of the family of God. What are some other ways that we can repent from our sins and transform our lives?

Baptism is at the very heart of our faith. It is the first sacrament that we receive (even if we are baptized as adults). Through Baptism, we enter into the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ, becoming children of God. This is who we are. We are also welcomed into the family of faith in the Catholic Church. Baptism gives us the grace to lead a Christian life. All the other sacraments also help us to do this. They provide us with tangible encounters with God, who gives us the grace to turn away from sin and return to God in all moments of our life.

### ► What sacraments have you received? How do they help you encounter God in your daily life?

The season of Advent is a very special time in which we reach out to others in response to our baptismal identity as children of God. Through Baptism, each of us is called to radical love and service of others. We are called to be like Christ, that is, we are called to emulate him and called to follow his teaching and example. We remember and act on our baptismal identity when we minister to one another; we are called to be Christ's hands and feet.

Like John the Baptist, in Advent we are called to act on behalf of someone far larger than ourselves and point away from ourselves and toward God. We are called to make ready the way of our Lord. We are called to lives of prayer, service, and radical love of others.

### ► How can you lead others to Christ during this time of Advent?

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 76.*

**Baptism is a sacrament that initiates us into the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ and gives us an identity as children of God.**

**Through Baptism, we are called to holy lives and to act in justice for others.**

**Like John the Baptist, we work to point toward Christ and his salvation.**

# Act on the Word

## Baptism and Its Role in Our Lives

The waters of Baptism do not evaporate and leave us dry for the rest of our lives; Baptism, by its nature, is meant to be a source of grace throughout our lives. Have the young people break into small groups to discuss service/acts of charity in light of their baptismal call and Christ's mission.

- ✧ Why is it important to serve the disadvantaged?
- ✧ How did Christ serve those who struggled in life?
- ✧ How does following Christ's example point others toward him?
- ✧ How can they live out their baptismal call in everyday life, not just during Advent?

Gathering the young people back into a larger group, conclude the discussion by reflecting on what the young people's baptismal call may look like in the future. Use the following questions to help guide the discussion.

- ✧ How can this be reflected in their college life or in their job?
- ✧ What impact would having a family have on this call and vice versa?
- ✧ What if one of the teens is called to the religious life or priesthood?

Encourage the teens to seek out those members of the parish who are in vocations that are similar to ones they are considering for themselves. All Christians are called to live their lives as witnesses of Christ and bring other people to know God.

## Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus Christ,  
John the Baptist calls us to prepare for  
your coming.  
May we repent, live intentionally,  
and rejoice in your nearness to us.  
May our lives show our deep faith in you.  
You live and reign with God the Father,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.*

## For Next Sunday

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*