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Year B 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION AVAILABLE ALSO

Sunday Mass Readings

First Reading:

Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 85:9-14

Second Reading:

2 Peter 3:8-14

Gospel:

Mark 1:1-8

"Prepare the way of the
Lord, make straight his
paths"



image: canva.com

Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

Pray

In the Gospel today we reflect on the mission of John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah.

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Are you preparing the way for Jesus in your own life and circumstances? Is the way you are living your life helping others to know Jesus as a loving Saviour? Is there anything that needs to change?
- Pray into this idea this week, asking St John the Baptist for his intercession too, for the courage and the clarity to know what needs to be done in your own heart, home, workplace or wherever you find yourself to make straight the paths for the Lord.

Talk

In today's readings we hear about John the Baptist preparing the way for Jesus.

- What kind of things are you doing in your house to prepare for Christmas? Make a list of as many things as you can think of!
- Check your list - how many of these help to prepare the way for Jesus, to celebrate His birth and look forward to His second coming, in a particular way?
- Can you make time as a family to pray each day, to visit the Church, to go to confession, to light an Advent candle, to put up a crib as a reminder of Jesus' birth? What else could you do?

Family Challenge!

If you do not already have something, create a physical space in your room with a reminder of the true meaning of Christmas, and the beautiful season of Advent: maybe you could use a purple cloth, a candle (or an Advent wreath if possible!), a calendar to countdown (you can find lovely ideas on Etsy.com for inexpensive calendars for the names of Jesus this advent). Make sure this space is in a visible place!

PREPARE THE WAY

Today's Gospel is taken from the beginning of Mark. Unlike Luke and Matthew, Mark does not include any details of Jesus' birth. Instead Mark begins with the appearance of John the Baptist in the desert. On this the Second Sunday of Advent, we are invited to reflect upon the role of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus and the salvation that he would bring to us.

Mark's description of the appearance of John the Baptist highlights John's continuity with the Jewish prophetic tradition. Mark combines quotations from the Old Testament books of Malachi, Isaiah, and Exodus. Mark's description of John as an ascetic, living in the desert, clothed in camel hair, and eating locusts and wild honey, is reminiscent of the description of the prophet Elijah found in Second Kings. The people of Judea and Jerusalem flock to him, listening to his message of repentance and forgiveness; they also come to him to be baptized. Mark's Gospel is clear, however, that John the Baptist's role is only to prepare the way for another who will come, one who is greater than John.

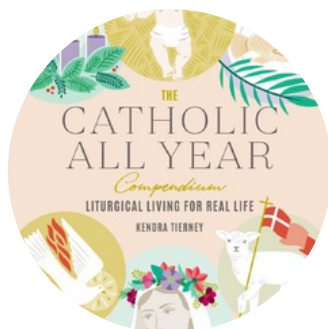
Many scholars believe that the Gospels reflect the tension that likely existed between followers of John the Baptist and disciples of Jesus. Each of the four Evangelists report on John's preaching and baptizing, and they each emphasize the importance of Jesus' baptism by John. The four Gospels also explain that John was sent to preach in preparation for another. In the Gospel of Luke, the question is raised as to whether John the Baptist was himself the Messiah. Just as in today's Gospel, however, John speaks quite explicitly that the Messiah was to come after him.

In today's Gospel we hear John the Baptist contrast his baptism of repentance with the baptism that Jesus will inaugurate. John says that he has baptized with water, but that the one who is to come will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John's baptism was not yet a Christian baptism, but a preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism through which sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received.

John the Baptist is presented to us as a model during Advent. We, too, are called upon to prepare a way for the Lord. Like John the Baptist, we are messengers in service to one who is greater than we are. Our Baptism commissions us to call others to life as disciples of Jesus.

Taken from Loyola Press - Sunday Connection

CHECK IT OUT: THE CATHOLIC ALL YEAR COMPENDIUM



If you have been wondering how to bring the rich traditions of the Catholic Church's liturgical year into your family life, this is the book for you. If you have no idea what the liturgical year is, but you are looking for ways to bring your faith home from Sunday Mass—in every season, all year long—this is the book for you too.

Book by Kendra Tierney: available on Amazon



ARE YOU PREPARING?

In this Gospel passage, we hear about Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, who lived a radical and unconventional lifestyle in response to a personal call by God to prepare the way for the Messiah. John understood that a genuine conversion of heart would be necessary to really accept the Messiah's message. He wanted people to repent and believe, to prepare a way for the Messiah. Can you imagine how someone like John the Baptist would be viewed in today's world? Do you think his message is still relevant today? In the Catholic tradition, one of the most beautiful and healing sacraments is the Sacrament of Reconciliation or Confession. It is a chance to take stock of our lives, see what is going well and not so well, see what is hindering us from drawing close to God and what we need forgiveness for. God's mercy is freely available to us. He doesn't just offer to mend our broken hearts: He puts a new heart in us each time we go to confession, and strengthens us so we can follow the path to Heaven again!

This week:

Take some time over the next few days or weeks to make a good examination of conscience. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you try to remember any areas of your life where you failed in your relationship with God, others or yourself; times where you failed to show love or deliberately ignored God's will or guidance for your life. Find out when your local church has confessions and decide to go. you can pray for the priest in advance too!

Confession is a place of victory (Fr Mike Schmitz)

Prepare the Way (Charlie Hall)

To the Heights Youth Resource also available



Family Prayer

Jesus, help us to prepare the way for you this Advent and always. May we be a joyful messenger of the Good News, and a voice that cries in the wilderness for all to hear! Amen

EVENTS

Live Crib in St. Mary's Parish, Cahir: December 16th, Saturday, 4-8pm with the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother.

Monastic Shop: Sisters of Mary Morning Star: Weekdays 2 - 5.30pm. Please ring doorbell. Handmade gifts: Lemon Curds, Jams, Greeting Cards, Rosaries, CDs, Pictures, Calligraphies, Candles, Woodwork. The Friary, Lady Lane, Waterford.

A Thrill of Hope: Taking a look at Scripture: Preparing for Christmas led by the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother. 3 Thursdays of Advent: 7, 14, 21 December. 6pm Scripture Talk in the Parish Rooms, 7pm Advent Holy Hour in the Main Church. (7th December Mass instead of Holy Hour). St Mary's Parish Church, Cahir, Co. Tipperary

Lightfever: Saturday 23rd December - Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity Waterford. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, candle light, music, silence, confessions available. Time to be confirmed.

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