

## SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT YEAR A

### Welcome the Christ everyday.

Then Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming?

But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father," because I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand; he will clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

#### Reflection

Each day we are asked to live as baptised Christians. What does this mean to you and how do you think you could better live out the promises of your baptism?



#### Final Prayer

Lord you have mercy on us.

As baptised people help us to judge wisely the things you ask of us and lead us to the everlasting life that you have prepared for us. Amen.

#### **Weekly challenge**

Spend time this week preparing to go to reconciliation by looking at your life, especially in relationship to others.

The bee is a symbol of wisdom, it is wise enough to know where to go to collect nectar from flowers to turn it into sweet honey. We should be wise enough to take what we are given (our nectar) and daily transform ours and our neighbour's lives, making both sweeter.

**A cup of tea is the way we offer hospitality to others; it says "welcome, come in, join us, have a cuppa".**

**When we welcome others, as Christ does, we become the face of Christ to them.**

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#### Prayer Focus

- \* Use purple or white cloth.
- \* Bible.
- \* Teapot and cup.
- \* Lavender fresh or dried.
- \* Honey.
- \* 2 candles in purple or lavender.



#### **Prayer for lighting candle**

Let us ask God to help us to welcome Christ into our lives today so we can praise and thank him for his continuing love.  
( Light the first two candles.)

God of power and mercy, open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that interfere with our vision of Christ, so that we can share his wisdom and become one with him.  
Amen.

### **First Reading Isaiah 11:-1-10**

Jesse is the father of David and it is from this family, from the son of the sons of Jesse, that the remarkable “King” will come. The prophet sees the family of Jesse as being in decay and only a remnant (root) of life exists in the family. A scion (a bud) will appear from the root, and grow, to re-energise the people: he will be one who is full of the Holy Spirit. He is a bringer of all that the people need, to find fulfilment and paradise-like conditions. Everything will be changed by the advent of this “shoot”. All nations, all peoples, not just the Jews, will be invited to be part of what the expected one will bring.

### **THE ROOT OF JESSE SHALL STAND AS A SIGNAL TO THE PEOPLE.**

#### **Reflection on the Reading**

Isaiah gives a very graphic picture of what he sees as happening when the expected one comes. What sort of images do you think Isaiah may have used today to express a world of such peace and harmony?

#### **Psalm 71**

This psalm was traditionally written by King Solomon, and highlights the time he reigned: Israel's golden age of peace and prosperity. But Solomon also looks to the future when God's reign will bring about perfection.

**Justice shall flourish in his time and fullness of peace forever.**

#### **Second reading Romans 15:4-9**

Paul had not yet been to Rome when he wrote to the Romans; many of those practicing Christianity in Rome were not Jews but gentile converts. Paul encourages them to respect each other's differences. With Christ as their model, they are to work towards real oneness, no matter what background they have.

#### **Reflection on the Reading**

When we look into our own lives, are there people, religious groups or social groups with whom we do not feel comfortable? How do you feel you could create better harmony for yourself, with them?

#### **Introduction to the Gospel**

*Matthew does not mention in his Gospel the relationship between John and Jesus. He may have presumed that his audience understood this relationship. John, by baptising those who came to him, is preparing the hearts and minds of the people for the awaited Messiah. He asks them to repent, to become obedient to God. The use of the term “the kingdom of heaven” only appears in the Gospel of Matthew. “Heaven” for the Jews, who never spoke the name of God, is a substitute name; it means for them in effect the rule of God over his people, God's triumph over evil and his supremacy over death. Baptism was already practiced by some Jewish sects as a form of ritual cleansing, wiping the slate clean of sin, returning to God.*

#### **Gospel Acclamation**

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



#### **Gospel Reading Matthew 3: 1-12**

In due course, John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judea and this was his message: ‘ Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.’ This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said:

A voice cries in the wilderness:  
Prepare a way for the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey.