

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Shepherd of Israel

Almighty and ever-living God,
you are the source of all consolation
and font of our salvation.
You have saved your people from
the wilderness,
gathered them like lambs into
your bosom,
and fed them with a mother's care.
Make level within us all that sin has
made rugged;
take the crooked paths of our hearts
and make them straight.
May our repentant hearts turn
to you and,
at the coming of your Son, be found
eager to welcome him
so that, in joyful celebration,
your chosen people can say, "Here is
your God!"
Through Christ our Lord.

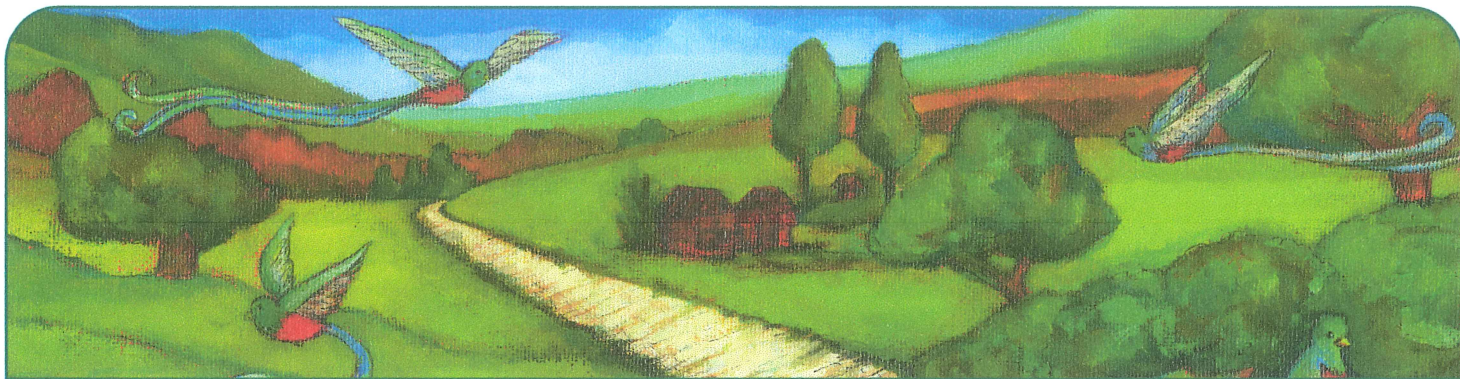
Sunday, December 10, 2017
A New Heaven and Earth

Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:1–5, 9–11; Psalm 85:9–10, 11–12, 13–14; 2 Peter 3:8–14; Mark 1:1–8. During this second week of Advent, we reflect on the future God has in store for us. When we delve more deeply into the Scriptures, it becomes clear that Advent is not as simple as we may think. Last week's readings urged us to be watchful and to ready ourselves for Christ's coming. This is not easy; it requires attention to God's Word within us. This week's message is in the same vein.

The prophet Isaiah paints a beautiful picture for the Israelites who are in captivity. Salvation will come, and the Lord will forgive all their sins. The image is radical. Isaiah depicts mountains being leveled and valleys being filled. He

directs Zion to tell this Good News to the entire world. A similar theme is in the Gospel. John the Baptist is the herald of the coming Messiah. John calls all creation to repent and seek God's forgiveness. He is the herald who paves the way for Jesus, the one who reveals the new heaven and earth, which Peter speaks of in the Second Reading.

What does it look like to prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Christ? It takes a vulnerable and watchful heart. We can find ourselves held captive. When we seek God's forgiveness with contrite hearts, we open ourselves to an amazing grace. God's mercy is the wellspring of all healing. So let us act out our salvation in the ways we live and announce the triumphant entry of the coming Christ.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 11

Incredible Things

Today's Gospel concludes with the phrase, "We have seen strange things today." As we begin the second week of Advent, it is important to recall the marvelous things our God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Through his Paschal Mystery, we are saved from death and share in eternal life. Jesus comes to heal or liberate us from all that paralyzes us and that keeps us from living the Good News. What incredible things have you seen? Around the Advent wreath, share ways you have been saved by God. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14; Luke 5:17-26.*

Tuesday, December 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Mary's message is one of hope and assurance. Appearing as a pregnant woman, she reveals that the child she carries will free the poor and oppressed. In the second option for the Gospel, John, who is in Elizabeth's womb, leaps with joy as Mary greets Elizabeth. Consider the times you have leapt with joy when you encountered Christ. *Today's Readings: Zechariah 2:14-17 or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; Judith 13:18bcde, 19; Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:39-47.*

Wednesday, December 13

St. Lucy

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells those who are burdened to come to him so they can find rest. Jesus is explaining to the crowds that he is the new law (yoke); to gain wisdom is to learn from him and follow him. St. Lucy, whom we honor today, understood this invitation. Lucy heeded Jesus' call and found rest/life with him. Take time today to research Lucy and the traditions surrounding her feast; for example, bake braided bread. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:25-31; Psalm 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 and 10; Matthew 11:28-30.*

Thursday, December 14

St. John of the Cross

The psalm refrain today tells us that God is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and kind. It recalls God's saving deeds when he rescued his people from exile and slavery. It is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving to tell of the faithfulness of God. The psalmist wants to tell everyone of God's Kingdom. In the Gospel, those who oppose John's message and eventually Jesus' message are attacking God's Kingdom. Advent calls us to announce the coming of God's Reign. Write a poem of thanksgiving today and be mindful of God's infinite love and mercy. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 41:13-20; Psalm 145:1 and 9, 10-1, 12-13ab; Matthew 11:11-15.*

Friday, December 15

Wisdom

We are invited in today's readings to contemplate the Wisdom tradition in the Scriptures. Those who follow the Christ are taught the right path. They live in the light. Listening to the voice of Wisdom brings the fullness of life. Take time to listen to Christ's voice. Reconnect with a wisdom figure in your life. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 48:17-19; Psalm 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6; Matthew 11:16-19.*

Saturday, December 16

In Plain Sight

Today's readings connect back to the readings from Thursday. John the Baptist, like Elijah, has announced the coming Reign of God, but some did not recognize him. It can be easy to miss what is in plain sight. Jesus also tells his disciples that he will suffer. Whom do you recognize as one who announces the coming of Christ? Let the refrain of the psalm be your prayer today so that we might see the living God and be saved. *Today's Readings: Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Psalm 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13.*



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Keeping the Seasons
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