

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Ready to Forgive

Father of mercy,
you give us prophets who call us back
to you
by proclaiming your mercy and
loving kindness.
You give us John the Baptist,
a prophet to bridge the old and
new covenants
with a baptism of repentance for the
forgiveness of sins.
Give us strength in our weak moments,
lift us up when we fall,
and always reassure us
that you are ready to forgive
every time we leave behind what
separates us from you,
and turn back to you.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 9, 2018

The Salvation of our God



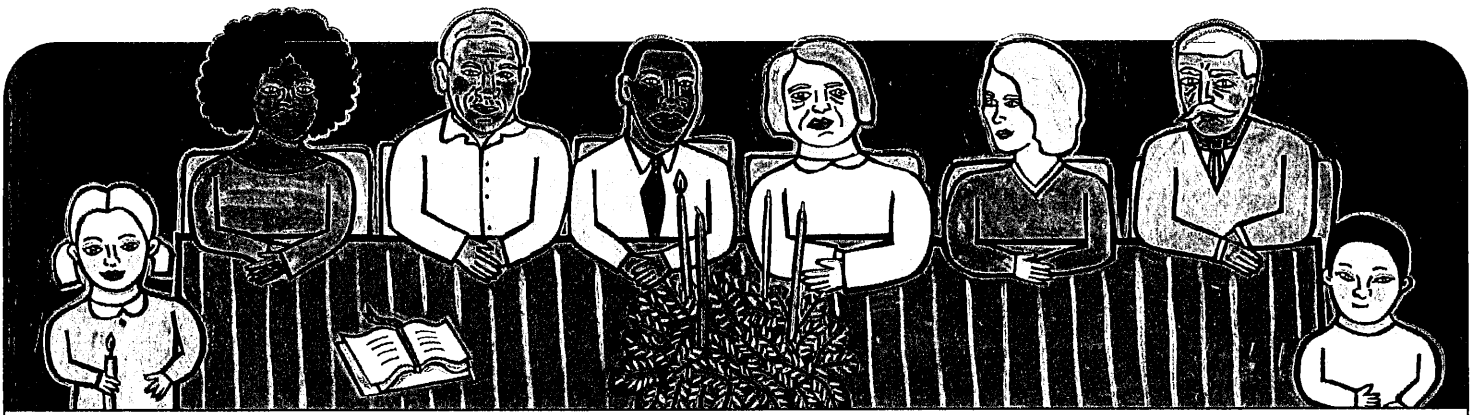
Today's Readings: Baruch 5:1-9; Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6; Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11; Luke 3:1-6. While kings and priests go about their important work, something is happening in the desert. "The word of God" comes to John, whose birth was surrounded by such marvelous events that people had asked, "What, then, will this child be?" (Luke 1:66). John, the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, is "a voice . . . crying out in the desert." He has an urgent message for the people of his time: to prepare the way of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord comes to us, too, when we take a rest from our work and withdraw to a place of silence. Try to spend ten minutes a day this week in silence, opening your heart to Jesus, making straight his paths by removing resent-

ment, bitterness, vengeful thoughts, anger, greed, envy, and anything else that might block his path. His great desire is to enter our hearts with the healing that he alone can bring.

With the path cleared, Jesus will amaze us with what he can do. He will lower mountains and hills in our life that had seemed insurmountable, straighten winding roads that seem to be leading nowhere, and smooth rough ways that are difficult to navigate.

As the love of Christ makes a home in our heart, it will begin to overflow to every person and situation in our life. We will be ready to celebrate Christmas with joy, knowing that it is but a foretaste of the joy we will know when Christ returns "and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 10

Bringing Others to Jesus

As in today's Gospel, people with disabilities sometimes need friends to bring them to Jesus. Does someone need a ride to Mass? Can all people access our church, sanctuary, religious education, and social spaces? Are children and adults with disabilities invited to participate in religious education and liturgical ministries? We must ask these questions if we are to say that "all are welcome." *Today's Readings: Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14; Luke 5:17-26.*

Tuesday, December 11

The Good Shepherd's Love

The metaphor of God as Shepherd and us as his sheep dates to the Old Testament. Isaiah compares God to a shepherd who feeds, carries, and leads his flock. In the New Testament, Jesus calls himself the "Good Shepherd." Today's Gospel has an example of how he is "good": when just one of us goes astray, he leaves the others behind to search for that one. God never forgets about us or gives up on us. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 96:1-2, 3 and 10ac, 11-12, 13; Matthew 18:12-14.*

Wednesday, December 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Mary, lowly and poor herself, showed concern for the poor when she appeared, with brown skin and wearing indigenous robes, to Juan Diego near Mexico City in 1531. She asked him to build a church in her honor. His bishop disbelieved such a story from this poor indigenous man. Three days later, when she told him to ask again, dozens of red roses dropped from his cloak, and the bishop saw the image of Mary imprinted on it. He built the church! Mary gave hope to Mexico's oppressed people, and to this day she is invoked to intercede for the poor and suffering. *Today's Readings: Zechariah 2:14-17; Judith 13:18bcde, 19; Luke 1:39-47.*

Thursday, December 13

St. Lucy

In the Gospel, Jesus sings the praises of John the Baptist, who will soon be martyred at the hands of Herod. Today the Church honors another martyr, St. Lucy, who died in AD 304 during a Roman persecution of Christians. She is said to have brought food to Christians hiding in the catacombs, wearing a wreath of candles to light her way. Lucy means "light," and we remember her during this season of waiting for the Light of the World. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 41:13-20; Psalm 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab; Matthew 11:11-15.*

Friday, December 14

St. John of the Cross

The first psalm is a recipe for a happy and fruitful life: "The law of the Lord is their joy; God's law they study day and night." John of the Cross, in sixteenth-century Spain, was called to a life of prayer in a Carmelite monastery. When other friars turned on him and imprisoned him for nine months, he had encounters with God that he described in mystical poems. He spent those days and nights joyfully with nothing to distract him from the love of the Lord. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 48:17-19; Psalm 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6; Matthew 11:16-19.*

Saturday, December 15

An End to Wrath

Today we hear about the great prophet Elijah. Taken to heaven in a whirlwind, he is to return as a forerunner of the Messiah: "to put an end to wrath before the day of the Lord." Jesus, who has just been transfigured and appeared with Moses and Elijah, explains that John the Baptist has fulfilled the mission of Elijah. Who will prepare the way for the Messiah's return? Who among us helps to turn hearts toward God and each other? *Today's Readings: Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Psalm 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13.*

