Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 6th December 2026

The Second Sunday in Advent — Mark 1:1-8

Relax

Make the Sign of the Cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Then read the Gospel — preferably aloud and slowly — paying attention to any words that stand out to you.

Read

This Sunday's Gospel : BAPTISM FOR CONVERSION

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. And so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

Did any words or phrases stand out to you in the Gospel? If so, take a few moments to meditate on them.

Reflect

Now read the Gospel again and consider what the Lord might be saying to you, or asking of you, through it. Then continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection...

Each Advent has two 'John the Baptist' Sundays: the first when we see John preparing a community for the Messiah, the second when he points out Jesus as the Lamb of God. Today is the first of these. John chose a point where the busy road from Jerusalem to the East crossed the Jordan River. There he button-holed all the busy financiers, merchants and other travellers and tourists, warning them to change their ways - and to change them now, before it was too late. 'I am too busy,' no doubt they said. 'I have other things to worry about; I have a wife and family to feed.' John was forming a community of repentance; but not so much a community which wept 'Boo-hoo!' about their sins, as a community of people determined to set their scale of values right. He meant them to stop going in one direction, to turn round and go in a different direction – towards God. Do we give ourselves a moment to pause and ask whether we have our priorities right? Where on that list of priorities does the entry of Christ into our lives come? **John expected Jesus to baptise with fire. Does that mean burning something away? Or warming something up? Or a shining light? What does your baptism mean to you?**

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Rest

Now call to mind the Lord's love for you, remembering that through this scripture the Lord is truly present. Then silently and prayerfully listen for God's voice and rest in God's love.

Respond & Request

Thank God for any insight you may have received, and respond by asking the Holy Spirit to bless you with a spiritual gift or help you to grow in a particular fruit of the Spirit.
You might pray for wisdom, courage, faithfulness, self-control, patience, generosity, joy, kindness, love, peace, faith, chastity - or another grace - to help you live out your faith this week.

Remember

This Wednesday's word for our families is **HOPE**
(To see the Family Version, please visit: wednesdayword.org)

As you pray for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and for the families connected to our schools.

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Wednesday Word Plus +

If you'd like to spend more prayerful time with God through the First and Second Readings, follow the same process for praying with the Gospel (overleaf). Gently place the First or Second Reading and Fr Henry's reflection into that same prayerful rhythm for more fruitful meditation with God's Word.



First Reading: *'Console my People, Console them'*

Isaiah 40:1-5. 9-11

'Console my people, console them,' says your God. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.' A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God.' Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

The reading from the Old Testament for today is the joyful song which opens the second part of Isaiah. After the 70 years of the Exile Israel is looking forward to the return to Jerusalem, aware that they are soon to be released from their captivity. They have 'served their sentence' in Babylon and their sin has been forgiven. The Lord will lead them in joy across the great desert as he led them across the desert at the Exodus, and will manifest his glory again. For Christians the excitement is that John the Baptist picks up this message as he prepares the people for the coming of Christ. The coming of the Lord to Jerusalem was never wholly fulfilled, and we can see that the great fulfilment of this passage is in the coming of Christ to his own. He brought the beginning of the kingship of God, and it is for us Christians to show Him, the glory and the love and the generosity of God, to a world which has not yet seen the splendour of his coming. This is the daunting responsibility of those who bear the name of 'Christian', who see in Jesus the manifestation of God's reign.

How may we best prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas and when he comes again in glory?

Second Reading: *The Lord Comes in the Night*

2 Peter 3:8-14

There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, 'a day' can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up. Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for is what he promised; the new heavens and new earth, the place where righteousness will be at home. So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.

The Second Letter of Peter, probably the last of all the writings of the New Testament to be written, here sets out to comfort Christians who were disappointed that the 'Big Bang' at the end of the world had not yet happened. The first generations of Christians had expected the world to come rapidly to an end - and yet it still goes on. Our task, says the author, is to live holy lives in peace, and to wait in patience. From this point of view, the annual cycle of Church feasts and festivals, even of Christmas, is a reminder that God is in control of his universe.

How do we live "holy and saintly lives"?

> **"Our task... is to live holy lives in peace, and to wait in patience."**

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