

Reflection Questions

- How is God straightening the path, filling in valleys, and lowering mountains along your journey of recovery?
- How are you noticing themes of hope, love, joy, and peace in your life?
- What kind of attitude change or *metanoia* have you experienced in recovery?

Listen to CIR on Catholic Radio

Tune in to discussions about addiction recovery and the Catholic Church as Scott Weeman, CIR founder, joins Catholic Answers Live! and Women of Grace Radio this week:

- Catholic Answers Live!: Wednesday, December 2 at 7:00 PM ET/4:00 PM PT
- Women of Grace Radio: Friday, December 3 at 11:00 AM ET/8:00 AM PT
- Listen online: ewtn.com/radio/listen-live

Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 85:9-10-11-12, 13-14

2nd Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-14

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

2nd Sunday of Advent



A voice cries out:

*In the desert prepare the way of the Lord!
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our
God!*

*Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill shall be made low;
the rugged land shall be made a plain,
the rough country, a broad valley.
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together;
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*

This scripture from the prophet Isaiah is cited at the very beginning of Mark's Gospel, which we hear on this Second Sunday of Advent. As we begin a new liturgical year, we will primarily be hearing from the Gospel of Mark, which continues to announce the gospel—or *good news*—of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The next two weeks are meant to prepare a path for the Lord to enter our lives and homes. As the season of Advent moves along, we will dive further into themes of hope, love, joy, and peace. These are the fruits of setting our sights on the coming of Christ.

Our preparation includes making room for Him to be our guide and protector. Our journey may not always be smooth, and this week it is implied that Jesus will pave a new way of life for us. Those who have developed a personal relationship with Christ have witnessed this necessary realignment. Rather than the addiction calling the shots in our family, we turn to Jesus for answers and courage.

Admitting powerlessness over the family disease of addiction moves us toward recognizing our need for a savior. Our lives had become unmanageable, and we needed a new set of directions to find freedom. We do this by getting honest with ourselves, others, and God. With humble anticipation, we come to believe that God can restore us (both as individuals and as a collective people) to communion with Him.

The second and third weeks of Advent feature John the Baptist as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. John preaches a theme of *metanoia*, which is the changing of one's attitude or the shifting of our life's story. In recovery, we refer to this as a spiritual awakening.

We hear of the first Christians making their way through the first few steps in this weekend's Gospel reading, tying it to their experience with baptism by water:

*John the Baptist appeared in the desert
proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the
forgiveness of sins.
People of the whole Judean countryside
and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem
were going out to him
and were being baptized by him in the Jordan
River
as they acknowledged their sins.*

As we prepare our way, it is important to recognize how transformation happens in God's kingdom. We are not our own savior, nor are we anyone else's. Rather, it is God's grace that allows change to happen. John the Baptist's final proclamation shares this truth:

*"One mightier than I is coming after me.
I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs
of his sandals.
I have baptized you with water;
he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*