

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

A voice of one crying out in the desert:

*“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”*

These familiar words from Isaiah return each Advent to awaken our hearts to God’s coming. In this Sunday’s Gospel, Matthew presents John the Baptist as the voice preparing the world to receive Jesus—the promised hope of Israel and the Savior who brings healing to the outcast, the lost, and the addicted. Advent is a season of preparation, and in recovery, we recognize this as essential spiritual work. We, too, are called to “prepare the way” so Christ may enter our lives more freely.

The next two weeks invite us to clear space for God’s presence. Each candle lit on the Advent wreath symbolizes a growing awareness of hope, love, joy, and peace—fruits that flourish when we let God shape our journey rather than relying on our own limited plans. To prepare a straight path, we must first acknowledge that our old ways of living were winding, steep, and often blocked by fear, denial, and self-will.

Advent preparation requires humility. It asks us to unlearn some of the things we once believed about ourselves, God, and our addictions. Recovery often begins when the “mountains” of pride are lowered

and the “valleys” of shame are filled with grace. Most of us did not arrive at recovery with smooth roads—our lives were marked by chaos, broken promises, and attempts to manage everything on our own. But through the Steps, God has begun to realign our direction.

We admit our powerlessness and recognize that our lives had become unmanageable. This honesty prepares the soil of our hearts for God to act. Advent reminds us that Christ doesn’t wait for perfect conditions—He enters into the wilderness, the desert places, the messy corners of our story. When we come to believe that God can restore us, individually and collectively, we begin to see the path open before us.

The second and third Sundays of Advent center on John the Baptist—Isaiah’s prophecy fulfilled. John’s message is one of *metanoia*, a word meaning “change of mind” or “conversion of heart.” In recovery, this is our spiritual awakening—a shift in attitude, a new way of seeing the world, a willingness to live differently. Our addictions—whether alcohol, drugs, food, sex, gambling, technology, or other attachments—were symptoms, not the core problem. The deeper issue was our spiritual disconnection.

Ralph Waldo Emerson observed, “There are three wants which never can be satisfied: the rich wanting more, the sick wanting different, and the traveler wanting anywhere but here.” Advent speaks directly

into this restlessness. The Steps and the sacraments teach us that true fulfillment comes not from “more,” “different,” or “elsewhere,” but from the steady presence of God walking with us today.

Recovery and Advent share a common invitation: prepare, awaken, open your heart. Let God straighten what is twisted, fill what is empty, and smooth what is rough. As we make room for Jesus, we begin to experience the peace that only He can bring, one day at a time.

### MASS READINGS

**FIRST READING** Isaiah 11:1-10

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 7

**SECOND READING** Romans 15:4-9

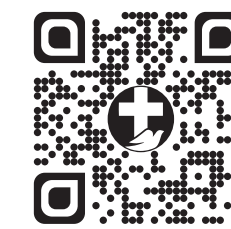
**GOSPEL** Matthew 3:1-12

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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

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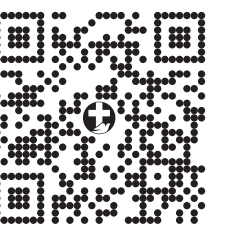
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