

## 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 words from Isaiah, echoed by John the Baptist in this Sunday’s Gospel, speak powerfully to adult children of dysfunctional homes. Many of us know what it feels like to live in a “desert”—a place shaped by uncertainty, emotional instability, lack of safety, or the burden of responsibilities we were never meant to carry. Advent enters these places with a message of hope: God is coming to meet us, heal us, and guide us into something new.

Matthew’s Gospel introduces John as the one calling people to prepare their hearts for Christ. His message is simple but challenging: clear a path for God. For adult children, this preparation is deeply personal. We often grew up preparing for chaos, not peace; for tension, not comfort; for withdrawal, not connection. Advent invites us to awaken from these old patterns and to soften the places in us that learned to brace for impact.

The season of Advent unfolds through hope, love, joy, and peace. Yet these gifts often feel distant for those shaped by dysfunction. Many of us developed survival strategies—people-pleasing, perfectionism, emotional numbing, or hypervigilance—that once protected us but now prevent us from living freely. Advent asks us

to notice these inner landscapes not with judgment, but with compassion. Where are the valleys of shame that God wants to fill? Where are the mountains of fear or resentment He wants to lower? Where are the winding paths of self-protection He is straightening?

Admitting our powerlessness over the past is a major part of preparing the way of the Lord. Adult children often carry a false belief that we were somehow responsible for the emotional climate of our childhood homes. Recovery helps us unlearn these burdens. When we let go of the illusion of control and allow God to guide our healing, the way becomes clearer, and our hearts grow calmer.

John the Baptist’s call to *metanoia*—a change of heart and mind—reflects our journey in recovery. *Metanoia* for adult children includes coming to believe that we are worthy of love, that our needs matter, and that God desires to restore what dysfunction distorted. It also means recognizing when we revert to old roles or defensive habits and gently inviting God into those moments.

Awakening from sleep may mean emerging from emotional numbness, fear-based living, or long-held patterns of self-reliance. Throwing off darkness may include releasing the lies we believed about ourselves—that we are unlovable, too much, or not enough. Putting on Christ means slowly allowing God to reshape our identity in truth, dignity, and gentleness.

As 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 redirects that longing toward God, who meets us here and now. In this sacred season, we prepare the inner path by practicing honesty, prayer, connection, and self-compassion. God does not ask for perfection—only willingness.

As we make room for Christ this Advent, we trust that He is already straightening the path before us, smoothing the rough places within us, and guiding us into deeper freedom—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 or healing the emotional terrain shaped by your family of origin?
- Where are you beginning to see new signs of hope, love, joy, or peace in your life?
- What shifts in perspective or *metanoia* is God inviting you to embrace this Advent?

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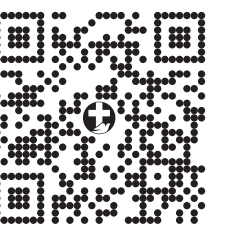
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