

Second 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.*

These prophetic words from Isaiah are cited at the very beginning of Mark's Gospel, the Gospel Reading for the 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.

This time of year invites additional urgency for us to apply the principles of 12-step recovery and our Catholic faith as we await Christmas. During the first few weeks of Advent, we are called to prepare our mind, body, and soul for the Lord to enter our lives. As the season 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 Jesus Christ.

Our preparation includes making room for Him to be our guide and protector. When we were consumed and enslaved by the pursuit of substances and behaviors, there was no room for anything else. As Jesus paves a new way of life for us, we are asked to cooperate by participating in meetings, reading scripture and recovery literature, connecting with fellows in recovery, committing to daily prayer, and surrendering to God's will.

Admitting powerlessness over our addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments moves us toward recognizing our need for a savior. Our lives had become unmanageable and we needed a new set of directions to walk the pathway of recovery. We get 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.

Reflection Questions

The second and third Sundays of Advent feature John the Baptist as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. John preaches the theme of *metanoia*, which is the changing of one's attitude or a shift in the way someone sees the world. In recovery, we refer to this as a *spiritual awakening*.

We hear of the first Christians coming to believe in the good news of Jesus and making a decision to turn their will and lives over to His care in the Gospel According to Mark this Sunday:

*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 the way one day at a time, it is important to recognize how transformation happens in God's kingdom. We are not our own savior. Rather, God's grace allows change to happen. John the Baptist concludes by proclaiming 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."*

- How have you seen God straighten the path, fill in valleys, and lower mountains as you walk the journey of recovery? How are you cooperating?
- How are themes of hope, peace, joy, and love being revealed in your life?
- What kind of spiritual awakening or metanoia have you experienced in recovery?

Weekly Advent Candle Lighting & Prayer

Join fellow CIR members every Sunday this Advent for a virtual candle lighting ceremony and reflection

- Gatherings will meet on Zoom **Sundays during Advent at 5p ET/2p PT** and last 30-45 minutes
- Invite your family members to join and participate!
- 4th Sunday of Advent is December 24 and will kick off our annual Christmas Marathon Meeting
- Find meeting information and login details at catholicinrecovery.com/virtual-meeting-schedule

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

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

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

Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-14

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8