

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 prophetic words from the Book of Isaiah are often used in reference to John the Baptist and are quoted in the Gospel reading on the Second Sunday of Advent. As we continue into a new liturgical year, we will primarily be hearing from the Gospel of Luke, which shares themes of great pardoning and universal salvation. Jesus makes the good news available to all, including the outcast, the lost, and the addicted.

The next few weeks are meant to prepare a path for the Lord to enter our lives. 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. 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 prepare for the road of recovery. 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 Sundays of Advent feature John the Baptist as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. John the Baptist preaches the 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.

As we prepare our way, we recognize that our addictive and compulsive behaviors—whether centered around alcohol, drugs, food, sex, gambling, technology, spending, relationships, or other attachments—have been but a symptom of a deeper spiritual condition. Removal of our addictions and unhealthy attachments is but a step in the process of preparing ourselves for the coming of Jesus.

Ralph Waldo Emerson noted, “There are three wants which never can be satisfied: that of the rich, who wants something more; that of the sick, who wants something different; and that of the traveler, who says anywhere but here.” It is from this discontented nature of our desires that the Twelve Steps and the sacraments set us free.

Reflection Questions

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

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Baruch 5:1-9

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6

Second Reading: Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11

Gospel: Luke 3:1-6