

Reflection Questions

- If you woke up tomorrow and every path on your journey was made straight, every valley filled, and every mountain made low, how would you know it?
 - What would be different?
- Are you noticing themes of hope, love, joy, and peace in your life?
 - If so, are there patterns you're recognizing or moments that point toward fulfillment more than others?
- What kind of attitude changes or metanoia have you experienced in recovery?

Have a Blessed Advent!

The Advent Season is a great opportunity to reflect upon the space we make for Jesus Christ. A few ways to directly confront the road blocks that get in our way of knowing loving, and serving our Lord include:

- Participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation between now and Christmas Day
- Serving those less fortunate over the upcoming weeks
- Fasting from a habit, behavior, or substance

Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 7

2nd Reading: Romans 15:4-9

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

2nd 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 is quoted in this week's Gospel Reading on the Second Sunday of Advent. As we continue throughout a new liturgical year, we will primarily be hearing from the Gospel of Matthew, which describes Jesus Christ as the hopeful fulfillment of what God promised the Israelites. Jesus makes the Good News available to all, including the outcasted, the lost, and the addicted.

The coming weeks are meant to prepare us in a way that readies a path for the Lord to enter our lives. As the season of Advent moves along, we will dive further into the 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 a part of our lives. Often that means unlearning the things that we think we know about ourselves, our condition, and God so that we may be open to a new experience of all these things.

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 that have experienced a developing personal relationship with Christ have witnessed this necessary realignment.

Admitting powerlessness over our addictions 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 beginning to 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.

The second and third weeks of Advent feature John the Baptist as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. John regularly 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 behaviors—whether centered around alcohol, drugs, food, sex, gambling, or other compulsions—have been but a symptom of our spiritual condition. Removal of our addictions and unhealthy attachments is but a step in the process of preparing ourselves for the coming of Christ. Once awoken, we must be sure to take action each day to remain awake.

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 ours that the twelve steps and sacraments set us free.