

2nd 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.*

This scripture from the prophet Isaiah is cited at the very beginning of Mark's Gospel, which we hear on this 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.

The next two 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. 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 who have developed a personal relationship with Christ have witnessed this necessary realignment.

Admitting powerlessness over lust, pornography, and sexual compulsions 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 came 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 preaches a 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.

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We hear of the first Christians making their way through the first few steps in this weekend's Gospel reading, tying it to their experience with baptism by water:

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 our way, it is important to recognize how transformation happens in God's kingdom. We are not our own savior. Rather, it is God's grace that allows change to happen. John the Baptist's final proclamation shares 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 is God straightening the path, filling in valleys, and lowering mountains along your journey of recovery?
- How are you noticing themes of hope, love, joy, and peace in your life?
- What kind of attitude change or *metanoia* have you experienced in your recovery from lust addiction?

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- Catholic Answers Live!: Wednesday, December 2 at 7:00 PM ET/4:00 PM PT
- Women of Grace Radio: Friday, December 3 at 11:00 AM ET/8:00 AM PT
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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

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

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

2nd Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-14

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8