

Second Week of Advent Prayer for Families

“May we be in this world a ray of that light which shone forth from Bethlehem, bringing joy and peace to the hearts of all men and women.”

Pope Francis

Acknowledgement of Land

As we gather in God’s presence, let us connect our feet to the ground and remind us of the place that we are praying on. As we enter stillness, and open our hearts, we acknowledge the wisdom of the First Nations Peoples of this place, and their continued spiritual connection and relationship to place. Imagine what is possible when we listen deeply to the people of our place and speak the language of peace.



Second Week of Advent

Peace

The second candle on the Advent wreath represents Peace. Like the first candle, it is also purple. Often called the “Bethlehem Candle,” the second Advent candle reminds us of Mary and Joseph’s journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem before Mary gave birth to Jesus. Building on the meaning of the Prophecy Candle, this second candle recalls that after all of the division, destruction, and dispersion of the kingdom in the Old Testament, there might finally be peace on Earth – Jesus is coming, and so is his Kingdom of Peace.

*A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.*

(Isaiah 11:1-10)

Scripture

A reading from the Holy Gospel of Matthew [Matthew 3:1-12]

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

*“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”*

John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.



“I baptize you with^[b] water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with^[c] the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Reflection

The focus of today's Gospel is John the Baptist. But his focus is always on the One who is to come and who is more powerful and greater than he is. Through advent we are called to turn our attention also to the One who is coming after John. During this time, we focus on Jesus whom John the Baptist is preparing the way for.

In these often very complicated times how refreshing it is to hear a clear and straightforward message. Repent, sort out your priorities and take stock of your life.

Teach us, Lord, to prepare to change if needed.

Leader: Let us pray (all together).

God of Peace,
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of peace in the world.
Help us walk in that peace during the weeks of Advent,
As we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus, our Saviour.
Amen

Call to Action

- [Reflection Questions for the 2nd Sunday of Advent Year A](#)
 - Am I ready to change?
 - Am I complacent and comfortable the way I am?
 - Am I ready to ask God for help?
 - Who am I following?

References

Context: Hallow (2022) Advent Candles and Advent Wreaths: The History and Meaning, Colors, Symbolism, Themes, and More. <https://hallow.com/blog/advent-candles-and-advent-wreaths/>

Reflection: Sacred Space (2022) *Sacred Space: your daily prayer online* <https://www.sacredspace.ie>

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