

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 84)

ANTIPHON: Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

RESPONSE: Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

LECTOR: I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace, peace for his people. His help is near for those who fear him and his glory will dwell in our land. **R.**

LECTOR: Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth and justice look down from heaven. **R.**

LECTOR: The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit. Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.

TODAY'S READINGS Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8

NEXT WEEK (3rd Sunday Advent, Year B) Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

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*A voice in the
wilderness*



December 10 2023 2nd Sunday Advent Year B

I recall a scripture scholar describing John the Baptist as an extremely eccentric character with an odd wardrobe and an unusual diet. However, you imagine him, certainly John must have had a captivating personality, attracting large followings in less than comfortable surroundings, and this surely suggests that his message carried real conviction.

Mark and his fellow gospel writers are in no doubt that John the Baptist is the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecies about the one who would prepare the way for the coming of the messiah. Accordingly, John takes centre-stage in the liturgies of Advent. He invites us to think about our lives and to what extent we have welcomed the Lord into them, and how readily we are responding to his continuing invitation to follow him.

In his second letter Saint Peter is obviously concerned that the enthusiasm of some members of the early Christian community is beginning to wane because the promised Second Coming of the Lord has not arrived, and here are we, two thousand years later, still waiting and wondering. Of course, one of the fascinating aspects of Advent is that it expects us not only to commemorate the First Coming – the birth of the Christ-child in Bethlehem – but also requires us to look forward to his Second Coming in glory.

As we mature through life, we may well, like those Christians of the first century begin to wane in our zeal and commitment. It can prove

difficult to capture the magic of Christmas as we experienced it in our childhood, and the Second Coming may seem like a dim and distant prospect. However hard we try "to live lives without spot or stain", we may be growing weary, wondering how the Lord is going to fulfil his promises for us personally and for the whole of his creation.

Perhaps one of the lessons we can learn from this Sunday's liturgy is that we are not likely to find the answers in the hustle and bustle of everyday life. We do need to withdraw into the desert within ourselves if we are to hear the voice in the wilderness calling us to "make a straight highway for our God". The temptation is to allow the cacophony of voices to distract us and crowd out the one voice that wants to clarify our thinking and give us the inner peace that will put everything into perspective.

Entering the mind of God, we will discover that a day can mean a thousand years, while a thousand years are like a day. With that perspective we may be able to recapture the joy of our youth and the sense of wonder that infused our minds at Christmas in those days. Remember: we need the trust of the little child to be ready for the Kingdom.

A very merry Christmas to one and all.

Timothy J Buckley CSsR
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