

*We Respond*

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**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 18)

**ANTIPHON:** Your words, Lord, are spirit and life.

**RESPONSE:** Your words, Lord, are spirit and life.

**LECTOR:** The law of the Lord is perfect, it revives the soul. The rule of the Lord is to be trusted, it gives wisdom to the simple. **R.**

**LECTOR:** The precepts of the Lord are right, they gladden the heart. The command of the Lord is clear, it gives light to the eyes. **R.**

**LECTOR:** The fear of the Lord is holy, abiding for ever. The decrees of the Lord are truth and all of them just. **R.**

**LECTOR:** May the spoken words of my mouth, the thoughts of my heart, win favour in your sight, O Lord, my rescuer, my rock! **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! The Lord sent me to bring Good News to the poor and freedom to prisoners. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.

**Or**

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

**TODAY'S READINGS** Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-30; Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

**NEXT WEEK** (4th Sunday of Year C) Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19; Psalm 70; 1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:13; Luke 4:21-30

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your day with  
The Majellan*

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# majellan

## Repentance clears the way for hope



23 January 2022 3rd Sunday Year C

Today's gospel follows John the Baptist's preparation of the people of Israel for the coming of the Messiah. John's mission is to communicate as clearly as possible that God's people are in feeble spiritual health. John knows that God's chosen one is coming to offer a new way of knowing and relating to God. So, John exhorts them to repentance so that they will turn towards God with their whole hearts and respond to God's coming decisive action in the world.

Repentance can be a painful prospect when we must confront ourselves for the selfish people that we often are. Repentance also comes with the pain of discarding those desires and actions that we know hurt ourselves or others but that we hunger to keep enjoying. But, as we can see in the crowd's response, the baptiser's words don't cause people to be fearful or despairing. Instead, John's exhortations stir up genuine expectation within their hearts. John's promise of God's just judgement and the call to repentance is a sign to the Jewish people that the time of God's salvation and intervention in the world is at hand.

The promise that God is going to act decisively in the world is now being fulfilled. Instead of fear, the crowds know the hope of being gathered, like wheat, into God's dwelling place.

The same can be true for us. The act of repentance often feels like taking a pickaxe to the hard soil of our own hearts, digging

through the dry crust so that something can take root, grow and produce fruit. Once we let God break through our self-absorption and start to surrender our lives to God in concrete ways, we begin to experience the hope of a new life of joy and peace that we can have with God. In this way, repentance clears the way for hope to emerge.

In today's gospel, John is talking to a people who now realise their spiritual poverty and see that not only do they need to change how they live, but they want to change and can change. In response, John's advice to the crowds is profoundly practical. There are identifiable changes in how people can go about their work and daily lives that will turn them back to God's way. We can see here that the repentance that God desires applies to even the most mundane features of our lives. The works of mercy that John describes are not just products but features of authentic repentance.

And this is the glory of the baptism through the Holy Spirit referred to by John. John's baptism relied on the individual's willpower to turn and conform their lives to God's will. However, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus, pours into us the grace of God. This gift of God's grace slowly transforms us into new creatures that are fully capable of lives oriented towards love and justice in communion with God and our neighbour.

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