

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 125)

ANTIPHON: The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

RESPONSE: The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

LECTOR: When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage, it seemed like a dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, on our lips there were songs. **R.**

LECTOR: The heathens themselves said: "What marvels the Lord worked for them!" What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad. **R.**

LECTOR: Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage as streams in dry land. Those who are sowing in tears will sing when they reap. **R.**

LECTOR: They go out, they go out, full of tears, carrying seed for the sowing: they come back, they come back, full of song, carrying their sheaves. **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 Baruch 5:1-9; Philippians 1:3-6, 8-11; Luke 3:1-6.

NEXT WEEK (3rd Sunday of Advent, Year C) Zephaniah 3:14-18; Isaiah 12; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18.

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Office closure

Majellan Media will be closed from December 20 until January 13. Last orders will be taken on Monday December 9. Have a safe and holy Christmas with your loved ones.



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Preparing a way for the Lord

By ZaBanker - Banksy art work in Bethlehem 8 December 2024 2nd Sunday Advent, Year C

One of British street artist Banksy's famous pictures is The Flower Thrower. In this powerful image of peaceful resistance, a figure leans backwards with his arm poised to throw an object. A similar figure in other protest posters would be poised to hurl a violent projectile. Instead, Banksy subverts a potentially violent image with his figure holding a bouquet of colourful flowers.

John the Baptist emerges from the wilderness, clothed in camel's hair, surviving on a diet of locusts and honey. His wild appearance is juxtaposed against his peaceful, steadfast call to repentance and the forgiveness of sins. He calls people to turn towards the One who is coming, the One who will be the embodiment of all that John currently preaches.

Jesus's spiritual kingship subverts and overturns all notions of a powerful earthly leader who dominates his subjects and rules with power. Indeed, the God whom John proclaims not only meets his people in love but also accompanies them all the way to the cross. Jesus embodies a love which is tender and compassionate but which is also fiercely committed to accompaniment and solidarity with us, in the entirety of life's circumstances.

Philosopher Hannah Arendt explained that power is the human ability not just to act, but to act in concert (On Violence, 1969). In contrast to conventional notions of power, she held that power is the ability to communicate and cooperate, not to coerce and dominate.

In contemporary times, John's call to prepare for the Lord's coming, by making rough roads smooth so that humanity will see the salvation of the Lord can perhaps be heard in the voices calling to us from the margins: the voices of women, LBGTIQ+ sisters and brothers, ethnic minorities, victims of abuse, and those fleeing persecution among others. We are invited to welcome everyone with compassion, to collaborate and stand with them. Together, we are witnesses to a community of faith which is united by love.

Building God's kingdom is almost always an uphill struggle, yet it helps to hold fast to the vision that his kingdom is both "now and not yet" and to persist with our efforts for mercy, justice and unity.

In the first reading, the prophet Baruch uses the metaphor of beauty to encourage Jerusalem to hold fast to its vision of God: Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress; put on the beauty of the glory of God forever.

In challenging times, a helpful way to remind ourselves of the presence of God is to notice and rejoice in the beauty which surrounds us, to recognise God's presence, amidst our struggles. French philosopher Simone Weill in Waiting for God describes it quite profoundly: The beautiful is the experiential proof that the incarnation is possible ... "Christ is really present in the universal beauty ... the beauty of this world is Christ's tender smile coming to us."

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