

## Second Sunday of Advent

† Sunday 6 December 2020



Cycle of Prayer: Openness to the word of God it being Bible Day

Keynote: Prepare for the Lord comes!

### Prophet Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-11

There is a majesty and at the same time an intimacy here between the Lord God and the prophet: *'Console my people, console them,'* says the Lord God, *'speak to the heart of Jerusalem.'* The Jews are now in exile in Babylon, their city Jerusalem having been destroyed. For the exiles the *'time of service is ended... the sin atoned for.'* Now the prophet announces the good news of the return to the Jewish homeland, *'A voice cries, "Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in. Every mountain and hill laid low... then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it" – for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'*

This image is of a royal progress, complete with baggage train and retainers, of a great and powerful king coming, – so the road must be levelled and cleared to make way for this important coming. From earliest times, Christians have applied this text to the coming of Jesus as Messiah king, and also link it with the processional entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem before his passion and death when the people cry out in welcome: *'Hosanna to the king!'* In the gospel today, John the Baptist also speaks out, calling all mankind to make a way for the coming Lord.

**Responsorial Psalm 84 (85)** – the coming age of peace and justice

### Second Letter of Peter 3: 8-14

Some folk get very impatient when waiting for someone to arrive, or something to happen! Maybe this impetuous apostle Simon Peter may have been just such a person! *'There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget,'* he writes, *'that with the Lord, "a day" can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day.'* Peter is addressing those in the Christian community who had been expecting Jesus to return but had grown tired of waiting. Peter warns that when the Christ returns it may be sudden and unexpected like a thief coming in the night. We must be watchful, ready and eager to welcome the Lord on his return. Peter reminds the Christian assembly, *'What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heavens and new earth... so then my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.'*

### Gospel according to Mark 1: 1-8

Mark the evangelist – the one who announces the Good News – gets straight into the facts. *'This is the beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.'* In declaring his intention at the outset, Mark gives a neat link to the Old Testament prophet's words, *'A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight,'* and then Mark immediately launches into the introduction of his first character, John the Baptist who *'appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.'*

We might have a somewhat wild impression of John, *'who wore a garment of camel-skin, and lived on wild locusts and honey,'* but the people of Judea flocked to hear what John had to say, and seeking his baptism in the river Jordan close by. The evangelist would have us grasp John's important message calling people to repent, and to prepare: *'someone is following me,'* says John, *'someone who is more powerful than I am... I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'*

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NOTE – Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Tuesday, 8 December 2020