



ONE MISSION, TWO PARISHES



Second Sunday of Advent, Year C - 8th Dec. 2024

Administrator

Fr Alex Chow

Parish Secretary

Sonya O'Farrell

Wednesdays,

Thursdays & Fridays

10am – 2pm

SUNDAY MASS

Saturday Vigil

ST: & SL: 6pm

Sunday

St Luke's 8:30am

St Timothy's 10:30am

St Timothy's 5pm

(Vietnamese)

WEEKDAY MASSES

St Timothy's:

Wed & Thurs - 9:15am

Fri - 10am

1st Wed of the month

@ 10.00am

Mass of Anointing

St Luke's:

Tues - 5pm

Wed & Fri - 9:30am

Sat - 9am

Rosary after each

morning Mass

RECONCILIATION

SL: Sat 9.30am - 10am

5.30pm – 5.50pm

EXPOSITION OF THE

BLESSED SACRAMENT

SL: Tues 5:30pm-6:30pm

(note new time and day)

Baruch 5:1-9, Ps125, Philippians 1:4-11.

Gospel Reflection on **Lk 3:1-6**

Meditation: *Do you recognize the voice of the Lord speaking to you when you listen to the word of God in Scripture?*

Luke the Evangelist tells us that the "word of God came to

John in the wilderness" (Luke 3:2). Who was John the Baptist and what is the significance of the word which he received and delivered to the people of his day? Luke tells us that John was the son of Zechariah, a priest who served in the temple at Jerusalem. John stood at a pivotal juncture in the history of God's dealing with his people, between the Old and New Covenants .

John was filled and led by the Spirit: John's prophetic calling and mission preceded his conception and birth. The angel had announced to Zechariah that his barren wife will conceive a son, and "you shall call his name John," and "he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:13,15). When John received his name shortly after birth, his father prophesied that he would be "called the prophet of the Most High who will go before the Lord to prepare his ways" (Luke 1:76). John was called to be a prophet for God. In dramatic fashion Luke tells us when John appeared on the world scene. Luke lists a few of the key reigning rulers in John's era, including Tiberius Caesar of Rome (Luke 3:1). These rulers pale in reference to the man who now stood at the door of a new era of grace and salvation for the world. John's mission was to prepare the way for God's Anointed King who would come to establish God's rule above all other kings and authorities. Luke emphasizes the universal call of the Gospel to all peoples without distinction. He quotes from the prophet Isaiah that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God"(Isaiah 40:5; 52:10).

John was a servant of God's Word. How did John prepare for the coming of the Anointed (Messiah) King and Saviour of the world? Luke tells us that "the word of God came to John" when he was dwelling in the wilderness of Judea (Luke 3:2). John was called from an early age to devote himself to prayer and to the word of God. John not only took the Scriptures to heart, he molded his life according to them, and made himself a servant of the Word of God. John was led by the Spirit into a barren and lonely place away from the noise and distractions of everyday life. There God taught John in the solitude of the desert and prepared him for a prophetic ministry that would turn the hearts of his people to receive their long-awaited Messiah. In the ancient world when a king decided to tour his kingdom, he first sent his courier ahead to prepare the way. John is the courier and great herald of the Messiah King who proclaims to all the peoples that the impending reign of God is now very close at hand. Isaiah had long ago prophesied the role of the Forerunner of the Messiah (Isaiah 40:3-5). John undoubtedly took this word to heart as he searched the Scriptures and reflected on the word of God in the wilderness. When John began his public ministry he travelled throughout the region of Judea and preached a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Luke 3:3).

Do you allow God's Word to transform your life? How can we, like John the Baptist, prepare ourselves for the coming of Jesus Christ - today and everyday and when he comes again to bring us fully into his everlasting kingdom? John the Baptist tells us that the first step is conversion and repentance (Matthew 3:2; Luke 3:7). Conversion involves receiving God's word into our heart and mind and allowing his Word to change our attitudes and wrong ways of thinking and judging. Repentance is the deliberate turning away from sin (wrong-doing) and turning to God to receive his pardon, healing, and strength to do what is good and reject what is wrong. John saw from a distance what Jesus the Messiah would accomplish through his death and resurrection - pardon for our sins, healing and restoration, and eternal life for all who would believe in the Lord Jesus. Are you hungry for the Word of God and do you allow God's word to transform the way you think, speak, and live your life?

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Next Week Daily Readings 09 - 15 Dec 2024

MONDAY: Genesis 3:9-15,20, Ps 97:1-4, Ephesians 1:3-12, Lk 1:26-38. *The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

TUESDAY: Is 40:1-11, Ps 95:1-13, Mt 18:12-14.

WEDNESDAY: Is 40:25-31, Ps 102:1-10, Mt 11:28-30.

THURSDAY: Is 41:13-20, Ps 144:1-13a, Mt 11: 11-15.

FRIDAY: Is 48:17-19, Ps 1:1-6, Mt 11: 16-19. Saint Lucy, Virgin, Martyr

SATURDAY: Ecclesiasticus 48:1-4,9-12, Ps 79:2-19, Mt 17:10-13. Saint John of the Cross, Priest, Doctor

SUNDAY: Zephaniah 3:14-18, Is 12, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:10-18. 3rd Sunday of Advent

Is = Isaiah, Phil=Philippians, Mt = Matthew, Ps = Psalms (Taken from ORDO 2024, Liturgy Brisbane, ACBC 2023)

Mercy Evening: Second Rite of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Where: St Luke the Evangelist, Blackburn South

When: Tuesday 17 December 2024 from 5:30pm to 6:30pm

As Christmas is approaching let us to prepare ourselves spiritually, so that our hearts may receive the perfect gift of God's love, Jesus Christ during this Christmas. St Luke the Evangelist will have a Second Rite of Reconciliation on Tuesday 17 Dec 2024 from 5:30pm to 6:30pm. There will be scripture reading, reflection music, examination of conscience followed by confession and absolution given by three priests.



MINISTERS OF THE WORD

Saturday 6pm SL

6pm ST

Sunday 8:30am SL

10:30am ST

5pm ST

7 and 8 Dec

Ian Holmes

Caren Garlick

Kana Chelliah

Trevis Yee & Molly Hemsley

Mai Le & Gia Nghi

14 and 15 Dec

Olive Hammill

Patrick Kelly

Beryl Chelliah

Stefanie Chin & Joelle Rousetty

Ha Cao & Chi Nguyen

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

Saturday 6pm SL

6pm ST

Sunday 8:30am SL

10:30am ST

5pm ST

Godfrey Thong

Owen Grealy

Beryl Chelliah

Eleanor Mendes

Hoang Nguyen

Lucy Ferris

Peter Naughtin

Kana Chelliah

Chin L Tay

Youth Group

SLIDE OPERATORS

Saturday 6pm SL

6pm ST

Sunday 8:30am SL

10:30am ST

5pm ST

David Prabha

Michelle Chen

Megan McLean

Manny Gonzalez

Toan Tran

Nigel Tauro

Michelle Chen

Paul Tierney

Lee Min Yee

Toan Tran

SL WELCOMERS 7/8 DEC

6:00pm John Ryan

8.30am Margaret Gearon

10.30am Volunteer

SL CHURCH CLEANING

21st Dec. – Maree's Team

Maree Moss, Allen Leung,

Serena Ng & Lynda Kilroe-Smith

SL CHURCH FLOWERS

No flowers during Advent

ST CHURCH FLOWERS

No flowers during Advent

SL WELCOMERS 14/15 DEC

6:00pm Libby Theodore

8.30am Joe Brogno

10.30am Volunteer

ST CHURCH CLEANING

21st Dec @ 8am

Toan Tran, Dao Dinh, Hieu Nguyen,
Dieu Nguyen, Hoang Nguyen, Anico Yee,
Dzung Vu & Trong Nguyen

ST COUNTERS

This week Team 4:

Mary Choy & Eileen Tam

Next week Team 5:

Anico Yee & Pabs Gonzales

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

All who are sick, especially Bill Goodwin, Bernadine O'Meara, Kit Bing Fan, Kathryn Holmes, Therese O'Donoghue, Stewart Davis, Jerry Donoghue, Mark, Margaret Hayes, Charmaine Bancroft and all those Parishioners unable to be among us this weekend.

All who have died and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Abraham Kuruvilla, Sacha Soltys, Esme Brunton, Proserfina O'Raye, Timothy Le A Triet Nhan, Paul Le A Triet Sinh, Paul Le Auh Triet, Theresa Taylor, Xiao Meiling, Renza Paglia, Eunice Hasler, Betty Harrison, Beck Moreland, Sonia Shafton, John Carney, Barry White and Doris Cochrane. May they rest in peace.

WEEKDAY MASS: For the month of December, there will be **NO weekday Mass at St Luke's on Thursdays**. All parishioners are welcome to attend the 9.15am Mass on Thursdays at St Timothy's.

S.T. END OF SCHOOL YEAR MASS: On Tuesday 17th Dec. at 9.15am there will be an end of the school year Mass at St Timothy's. This will be a very special Mass of thanksgiving for the last students and staff of St Timothy's school before it becomes part of Emmaus College in 2025. All parishioners are invited to attend.

CHANGES TO MASS TIMETABLE FOR 2025: Please see the insert with the newsletter this week for a letter from Fr Alex and the Combined Parish Pastoral Council regarding proposed changes to the Mass timetable for 2025. Your feedback is welcome.

S.T. CHRISTMAS CARDS & CALENDARS: Christmas Cards and the 2025 Columban Calendars are now on sale at the ST Piety Stall. Packs of 5 cards are \$4.00 and packs of 10 cards are \$8.00. The Columban Calendar is \$9.00.

S.L. ANNUAL CARE GROUP CHRISTMAS HAMPER RAFFLE: Tickets will be on sale this weekend for the St Luke's Care Group Christmas Hamper Raffle. Donations for the hampers can be left in the labelled baskets in the church foyer. The proceeds go to our Care Group who look after funeral refreshments during the year. Thanks in advance for your support.

Resources

MELBOURNE CATHOLIC: [The joyful anticipation of Advent](#)

MAJELLAN MEDIA: [Anticipating Christ's coming](#)

The Journey This Week: On The Journey This Week: Fr Joshua Whicker MGL says the Gospel calls us to remove obstacles and open our hearts to Jesus. Mother Hilda says that no matter how disfigured someone's earthly identity may seem, they are known and cherished by the Father. Plus, Fr Tony Percy, and two Light Advent Series reflections. The Journey podcast available at www.jcr.org.au.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER:

The First collection is for the priest and retired priests.

The Second collection is for parish expenses

ST: Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Envelopes: \$212

Last week's Church Stewardship Envelopes: \$235

Vietnamese Donation: \$116

SL: Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Envelopes: \$316.50

Last week's Church Stewardship Envelopes: \$282

Parish Groups & Contacts

Volunteers and Rosters

ST: Corrie Quimbo

SL: Margaret Gearon

Baptism Preparation

ST: Mary Italiano

Vietnamese Community

Hoang Nguyen

Andy Tran

Vietnamese Youth

Theresa Nguyen

Parish Collection Preparers

ST: Barry Silvester &

Michael Kawalewski

Stewardship Counters

SL: Dale Dixon

Steve Kilroe-Smith

Parishes Safeguarding Committee

Theresa Nguyen, Mary Italiano,

Darren McLean

Janette Clark

Parish history

SL: Margaret Gearon

Parish Accountant

Bernard Negline

SL: Hall Hire

Sonya O'Farrell @ the

Parish Office – 9877 2292

Church Sacristan

ST: Margaret King & Hoang Nguyen

SL: Greg Grant

Church Housekeeping

ST: Margaret King

Church Cleaning & Flowers

SL: Megan McLean

Church Linen

SL: Beryl Chelliah

Parish Garden Maintenance

ST: Des Connors, Leo Watson,

Anico Yee & Vietnamese Community

SL: Darren McLean

Parish Choirs

ST: Mary Italiano & Theresa Nguyen

SL: Lina & Maria Mafi

St Vincent de Paul Conference

For Assistance: 1800 305 330

(Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)

Parish Contacts:

ST: John McCoy

SL: Tony Lobo &

Steve Kilroe-Smith

Entrance Antiphon: 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.

Response to the Psalm: The Lord has done great things for us; we are filled with joy.

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

Eucharistic Acclamation: We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Communion Antiphon: Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 09 December

The title of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM) has a personal connection to me. The parish which I was baptised and spend my childhood and teenage years was called the church of our Lady of Immaculate Conception, Brunei Darussalam. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception is the doctrine that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin. Mary's conception was preserved from all stain of original sin by a singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of future redemptive act of her Son of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race. This is the extraordinary truth: Christ was the redeemer of his Mother and carried out his redemptive action in her "in the most perfect way" (Fulgens corona, AAS 45 [1953], 581), from the first moment of her existence. The Vatican II Council proclaimed that the Church "admires and exalts in Mary the most excellent fruit of the Redemption" (Sacrosanctum Concilium, n. 103).



It was this grace that enabled Mary to give a true and considered "Yes" to the request, conveyed by the Angel Gabriel, that she should consent to be the mother of the incarnate God. The Magnificat is the lyrics of this doctrine 'My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, He looks on his servant in her lowliness.' (Luke 1:46-56). The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was almost universally believed over the centuries. This is one of the Marian doctrines that Islam shares with the Catholic Church, though of course the theological details are very different. 'in a famous Hadith attributed to the Prophet, it is affirmed that: "Every child is touched by the devil as soon as he is born and this contact makes him cry. Excepted are Mary and her Son". From this Hadith and from verses 35-37 of Sura III, Moslem commentators have deduced and affirmed the principle of Mary's original purity.' (Giancarlo Finazzo. L'Osservatore Romano, 13 April 1978).

This doctrine was defined as a dogma of the Church by Pope Pius IX in 1854 in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, where he solemnly proclaims that "... We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which asserts that the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from every stain of original sin is a doctrine revealed by God and, for this reason, must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful" (DS 2803). Back in Sept 2021, I had the opportunity to visit the room of the Immaculate Conception located in the Vatican Museum (refer to insert photo). This room was commissioned by Pope Pius IX in order to celebrate this beautiful dogma that contained frescoes by Francis Podesti (1800-1895). Here, I would like to present an analogy to the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM. Suppose a person falls into a deep pit, and someone reaches down to pull he/she out. The person has been "saved" from the pit. Now imagine a woman walking along, and she too is about to topple into the pit, but at the moment she is to fall in, someone holds her back and prevents her. She too has been saved from the pit, She was not simply taken out of the pit, she was prevented from getting stained by the mud in the first place.

This dogma does not pertain to the conception of Jesus Christ in Mary's womb. Rather, it deals to the conception of Mary in the womb of Anna whose husband was Joachim. Unlike the conception of Jesus Christ, Mary's conception was not by the Holy Spirit. As Mary is a human person, she too needs the redemption of her Son Jesus Christ our Saviour. From this dogma, we are encouraged to look upon the BVM as a model for us for accepting God and his will in our lives as God's original plan for us to live in his Divine Life without sin. In this regards Pope Francis reminds us that '*At the foot of the cross, at the supreme hour of the new creation, Christ led us to Mary. He brought us to her because he did not want us to journey without a mother, and our people read in this maternal image all the mysteries of the Gospel. The Lord did not want to leave the Church without this icon of womanhood, Mary, who brought him into the world with great faith, and also accompanies the rest of her offspring, those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus* (Rev 12:17). Evangelii Gaudium, no. 285.

Like the Blessed Virgin Mary, let us continue to listen, obey and do the will of God as we journey together with the Church to be missionary disciples sharing, bringing and journeying with others to experience the Salvific Love of the Infant Christ this Christmas.

Make a straight path for the Lord



2nd Sunday of Advent, Year C

There have been many people who came before Jesus to prepare the way for his arrival.

There are special people in your life who are helping you prepare the way for Jesus. Draw a picture of 2 of these people helping you. Write their names and how they are helping.

ABRAHAM was called by God from his home in the east to a new land called Canaan. God promised that this land would belong to the family of Abraham forever. Abraham is often represented with a symbol of a tent. Draw a picture of Abraham's tent.

DAVID was a young shepherd who was chosen by God to be the new King of Israel. The prophet Jeremiah told how one day a great ruler from the family of David would come into the world. As we know, that great ruler is Jesus. Draw a picture of King David's Crown.

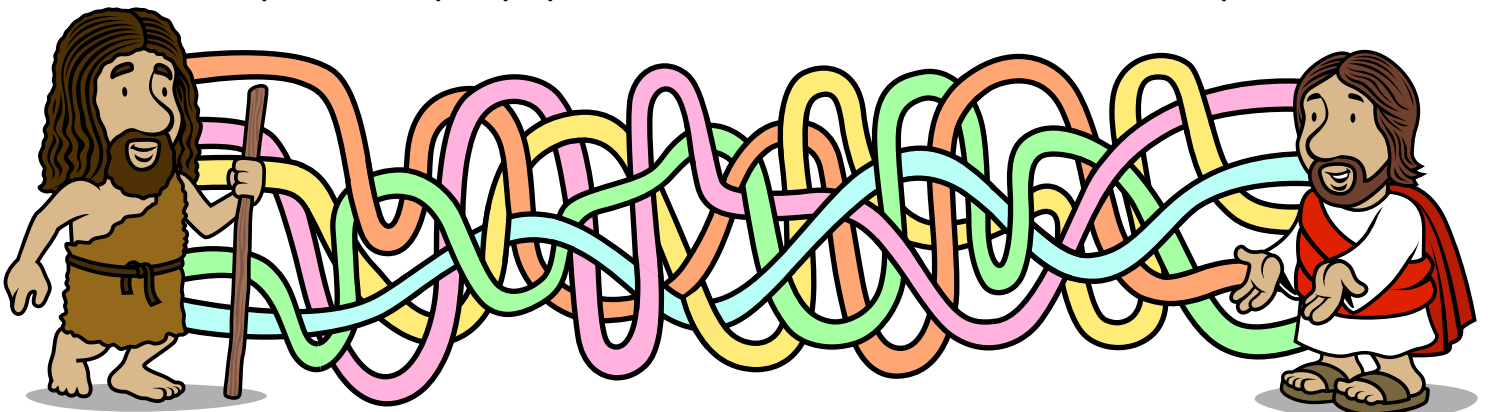
MARY: Write down the things you know about the mother of Jesus

JOHN THE BAPTIST: Write down the things you know about John the Baptist

_____ is helping me _____

_____ is helping me _____

Help John the Baptist prepare the way for the Lord by finding the straightest path to Jesus



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT – 8 DECEMBER 2024



COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God,
may no earthly undertaking hinder those
who set out in haste to meet your Son,
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom
gain us admittance to his company.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

John the Baptist is the 'voice crying in the wilderness'. Luke's list of the political leaders at the time when John began to proclaim repentance spells out the mighty challenge John was up against.

We always hear the good news in the context of the world events of our time. That means, for example, that we cannot hear Baruch's exuberant account of the exiles' home-coming without thinking of the millions of people languishing in refugee camps around the world. We yearn for such a safe and jubilant return home for displaced people in our own day. Joyous expectation is the mood and tone for Advent.

Those who call for a new Church and a new human order may feel that, like the Baptist, they are voices crying in the wilderness. Yet we must cry out for social justice for all. The season of Advent gives us fresh heart. It's a graced time for the powerful renewal of our hope and faith.

A reading from the prophet Baruch 5:1–9

Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress,
put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever,
wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you,
put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal
on your head:

since God means to show your splendour to every
nation under heaven,
since the name God gives you for ever will be,
'Peace through integrity, and honour through
devotedness'.

Arise, Jerusalem, stand on the heights
and turn your eyes to the east:
see your sons reassembled from west and east
at the command of the Holy One,
jubilant that God has remembered them.
Though they left you on foot,
with enemies for an escort,
now God brings them back to you
like royal princes carried back in glory.
For God has decreed the flattening
of each high mountain, of the everlasting hills,
the filling of the valleys to make the ground level
so that Israel can walk in safety
under the glory of God.
And the forests and every fragrant tree will
provide shade for Israel at the command of God;
for God will guide Israel in joy
by the light of his glory
with his mercy and integrity for escort.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 125

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

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.**

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

Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage
as streams in dry land.

Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap. **R.**

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.**

First Reading

The people in exile departed on foot with enemies for
an escort. Now God will bring them back in joy with his
mercy and integrity for their escort.

This text is pulsing with energy and enthusiasm; it
ignites a blaze of hope in the heart of a city lamenting
the loss of her exiled children. This is exactly how the
passage should be read. There are up-beat and
stirring images for a people who are at a low ebb,
weak or wounded – perhaps like some of us in the
Church today.

The passage is poetic in its imagery: beautiful clothes
and jewellery, hills and valleys, flowering trees and
forests. Use these images to proclaim the celebratory
message of joyful hope. They resonate with those of
Isaiah which we will hear in the gospel.

Underline some of the words you will stress: beauty,
integrity (it occurs three times), jubilant, safety... Allow
the radiant glory of God to shine through as you read.
Slow down at the end to express the tenderness of
God's care.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 125/126 picks up the theme of liberation from
bondage which gave us such joy in the first reading. So
now the response acclaims that we *are filled with joy*.

Note how strongly the psalm insists that this
deliverance is God's work. It is not due to human
interventions. We sing and laugh because of the great
things the Lord has done for us. It is like a dream.
What we sowed in tears, we reap with singing.

The third verse shifts somewhat to form a prayer on
our lips: *Deliver us, O Lord...* This should be sung/said
with the intensity of pleading. It contrasts with the
exultation: *Indeed we were glad*. For the rest of the
psalm, with the images of sowing and reaping, we
remember all that God has done for us and our tears
are changed into song.

Because the response falls into two parts, the
cantor/reader will need to use their intonation with
care to make sure the congregation hears it in full
before they all join in the song.

**A reading from the letter of St Paul
to the Philippians 1:4–6, 8–11**

Every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy, remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present. I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes. God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves you. My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognise what is best. This will help you to become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the Day of Christ, when you will reach the perfect goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for the glory and praise of God.

**A reading from the Gospel
according to Luke 3:1–6**

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.
Every valley will be filled in,
every mountain and hill be laid low,
winding ways will be straightened
and rough roads made smooth.
And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

Second Reading

Paul is writing to the Christians at Philippi from prison (this is in verse 7 which has been omitted from the reading). He is obviously very fond of this community where he had ministered. He says he misses them and loves them.

He has heard that the community is facing some challenges: internal divisions caused by a certain self-centeredness on the part of some. So he urges them to be generous and to deepen their unity and love. This is Paul's prayer for the community. He asks that they will be wise in knowing and doing what is best. The idea of being ready links it to the Advent season.

It is a good habit for readers to locate the Lectionary reading in the original context of the Bible. Next week the second reading is also from Philippians and it is a short letter. Read the whole to see how it sheds light on the way it could be best proclaimed.

Readers should present this text quietly, moderately and with warm sincerity. Make good use of pause because some of the sentences are quite long.

Gospel

*Rend the heavens and come down,
O God of the ages!*

This gospel passage presents a sudden surprise. In a very concrete and specific world situation, the word of God breaks in. It happens not through the important world leaders but through a very down-to-earth character – John the Baptist who is living with utter simplicity in the wilderness. He received the revelation and then proceeded to proclaim a baptism for repentance, that is, calling for a conversion of heart.

The long list of rulers sets the scene for this surprise. It should be read in a matter of fact reporting style, until the moment of revelation (*the word of God came...*) when the tone changes to one of wonder. Check the pronunciation of unusual words in the Pronunciation Guide at the end of this book.

Luke explains the meaning of John the Baptist's ministry by quoting the words of the prophet Isaiah. This is a preparation for the coming of the Lord. It identifies a key theme of Advent – patient waiting. While we wait for the story of Jesus' birth, Luke takes us some decades ahead as John the Baptist prepares for Jesus' public ministry.

The Isaiah imagery is similar to the prophet Baruch. This reading should also take up its mood of energy and joy.

Following the RNJB and the NRSV, the words "all mankind" could be read "all flesh".

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Solemn Blessing for Advent

May the almighty and merciful God,
by whose grace we have placed our faith
in the First Coming of his Only Begotten Son
and yearn for his coming again
sanctify us by the radiance of Christ's Advent
and enrich us with his blessing.

Amen.

As we run the race of this present life,
may he make us firm in faith,
joyful in hope and active in charity.

Amen.

So that, rejoicing now with devotion
at the Redeemer's coming in the flesh,
we may be endowed with the rich reward of eternal life
when he comes again in majesty.

Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down on us and remain with us for ever.

Amen.

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Advent, *The Roman Missal* p. 709)

An alternative translation of the scripture readings is given here from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). This may be particularly useful for those in parishes which use the NRSV Lectionary.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FIRST READING (NRSV)

A reading from the book of the prophet Baruch 5:1–9

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem,
and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God.
Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God;
put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting;
for God will show your splendour everywhere under heaven.
For God will give you evermore the name,
"Righteous Peace, Godly Glory."

Arise, Jerusalem, stand upon the height;
look toward the east,
and see your children gathered from west and east
at the word of the Holy One,
rejoicing that God has remembered them.
For they went out from you on foot,
led away by their enemies;
but God will bring them back to you,
carried in glory, as on a royal throne.

For God has ordered that every high mountain
and the everlasting hills be made low
and the valleys filled up, to make level ground,
so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God.
The woods and every fragrant tree
have shaded Israel at God's command.
For God will lead Israel with joy,
in the light of his glory,
with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (NRSV)

Psalm 126.1-2a, 2b-3, 4-5, 6 (R.3)

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

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy. R.

Then it was said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”
The Lord has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced. R.

Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like the watercourses in the desert of the Negev.
May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy. R.

Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves. R.

SECOND READING (NRSV)

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Philippians 1:3–6, 8–11

My brothers and sisters,
I thank my God every time I remember you,
constantly praying with joy
in every one of my prayers for all of you,
because of your sharing in the gospel
from the first day until now.

I am confident of this,
that the one who began a good work among you
will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

For God is my witness,
how I long for all of you
with the compassion of Christ Jesus.
And this is my prayer,
that your love may overflow more and more
with knowledge and full insight
so that in the day of Christ
you may be pure and blameless,
having produced the harvest of righteousness
that comes through Jesus Christ
for the glory and praise of God.

GOSPEL (NRSV)

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke 3:1–6

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius,
when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea,
and Herod was ruler of Galilee,
and his brother Philip
ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis,
and Lysanias ruler of Abilene,
during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiphas,
the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

He went into all the region around the Jordan,
proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins,
as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,
"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Thank You

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