





ADVENT



This Sunday's Gospel Reading 2nd Sunday in Advent Year C (Matthew 3: 1-12)

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Now John wore a garment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea went out to him and all the region about the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit that befits repentance, and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Prayer One

The Sign of the Cross

Let us remember that everything we do is
In the name of the Father, and of
the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen



*Reflection: This weeks Gospel deals with
One of the key messages of advent, John the
Baptist's call to Repent...*



When we talk about **repenting** we are talking about turning away from the things in our lives that are bad for us and for others; we are talking about examining ourselves and asking how we can be better people.

We are going to take a few moments this morning reflecting on some questions:

Are there times when we are unkind to others?

Are there times when we get angry too easily?

Are there times when we ignore people in need?

Are there times when we tell lies so that we can gain something or get away with something?

Are there times when we turn our backs on God?

Are there times when we fail to appreciate the good things that we have?





Final Prayer



Loving Father,

**help us to remember that whenever we go wrong,
you are there to call us back. You look at us with the
love of a caring Father and you want us to be the best
that we can.**

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Prayer Two

The Sign of the Cross

Let us remember that everything we do is
In the name of the Father, and of
the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Reflection:

On Sunday the Church celebrated Mary in the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception.

Many people mistakenly believe this feast celebrates Jesus' conception through the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary. However, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception celebrates Mary's conception in the womb of Saint Anne without the stain of original sin. Jesus' conception is celebrated on the Feast of the Annunciation on March 25, nine months before Christmas.





The Church has long affirmed that after Jesus Christ (i.e. God!) Mary is the most important person that has ever lived. She is even designated 'Queen of Heaven' ranking above all the saints and angels.

Not bad for a teenage year old girl from a small town in the middle of nowhere. A girl who had no power, no money and no particular education.

So, what made Mary special? Well, there are a few things, but the main thing is that when she was challenged to do something she said yes without hesitation. The thing she was challenged to do was to allow God - in the form of Jesus - to be born into the world through her. When the Angel Gabriel visited her, Mary was about 14 or 15 years old. She wasn't married and so falling pregnant was a problem. It would bring her trouble, and she knew it, but nevertheless she said YES. She simply trusted in God and took whatever came. And because of that, the incarnation of Christ was possible.

There are a lot of lessons we can learn from Mary: Trusting in God, being selfless and generous, doing kind things for others... It's a real goldmine! Mary is also a key part of the Catholic Church's prayer traditions. Since Mary isn't God, we can't pray to her, but we can ask her to pray with us and for us. We do this through traditional prayers like the Hail Mary and the Rosary and others, which you may want to factor in to what you are planning for this week.

Final Prayer:



LOVING FATHER...

You call each of us to be saints and you give us all the power to make it happen. Help us to believe that, like Mary, we too can find opportunities to do amazing things. Give us the wisdom to see those opportunities and the courage to take them.

**IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON,
AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.**

Prayer Three

The Sign of the Cross

Let us remember that everything we do is
In the name of the Father, and of
the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Reflection

*In Advent, we remember Mary, but we
also remember her husband Joseph,
who stood by her through everything.*



It must have been a difficult and confusing time for Joseph. His fiancée got mysteriously pregnant. He must have been so scared, worried and confused.

Soon after Mary became pregnant though, Joseph was visited by an angel, who told him not to worry. The angel told him that the child in Mary's womb was special and blessed, and that he should look after and care for them both.

Joseph is one of the characters of Advent that we tend to focus on the least, but he is one of the most important. Joseph is a great example to everybody who has ever stuck by somebody they loved, and been with them through thick and thin. He is an example of what it means to be a loving husband and a loving Father.





Final Prayer

Loving Father,

Help us to follow the example of Joseph this Advent, and to stick by those who we love. Help us to be faithful, caring and kind. Help us not to desert our friends when they need us most, but to be their strength and their help.

In the name of the Father and of the Son...



Final Thought...



SOMETIMES
WE KNOW WHAT WE
HAVE TO DO

*but we lack the
courage
to do it.*

LET US LEARN FROM MARY
HOW TO MAKE DECISIONS,
TRUSTING IN THE LORD.

POPE FRANCIS

Next weeks theme: Incarnation