



The Catholic Community of Divine Savior

# Family Faith Focus

Volume 9, Issue 19

December 6, 2020

## Dates to Remember

- December 5: 4:00 PM Mass
- December 6 9:00 AM Mass
- December 8: 7:30 AM Mass
- Please see our parish website for reservation information and links to view Sunday or weekday Masses online.

## Transformed by Love

*In view of her motherhood, Mary was preserved from original sin, that fracture in communion with God, with others and with creation, which deeply wounds every human being. By contemplating our immaculate mother, let us also recognize our truest destiny and deepest vocation: to be loved, to be transformed by love, to be transformed by the beauty of God. Let us look to her and allow her to look upon us for she is our mother and loves us so much. Let us allow ourselves to be watched over by her so that we may learn how to be more humble and more courageous in following God's Word. Let us learn to welcome the tender embrace of her son Jesus, which gives us life, hope and peace.*

— Pope Francis

## The Second Sunday of Advent

Mark 1: 1-8

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

*Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;  
he will prepare your way.*

*A voice of one crying out in the desert:*

*"Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight his paths."*

John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem

were going out to him

and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist.

He fed on locusts and wild honey.

And this is what he proclaimed:

"One mightier than I is coming after me.

I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals.

I have baptized you with water;

he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

## Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary

Tuesday, December 8, is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. On this day, at our 7:30 AM liturgy, we will celebrate the Church's dogma that our Blessed Mother was sinless from the moment of her conception in the womb of her mother. Under the title of the Immaculate Conception, Mary is the patroness of the United States. Let us pray that our Blessed Mother will continue to watch over our nation and its people in these challenging times.



# Sunday Gospel Connection: December 6, 2020

## The Second Sunday of Advent, Cycle B

### Mark 1: 1-8

**Gospel Background:** Today's Gospel is taken from the beginning of Mark. Unlike Luke and Matthew, Mark does not include any details of Jesus' birth. Instead Mark begins with the appearance of John the Baptist in the desert. On this the Second Sunday of Advent, we are invited to reflect upon the role of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus and the salvation that he would bring to us.



Mark's description of the appearance of John the Baptist highlights John's continuity with the Jewish prophetic tradition. Mark combines quotations from the Old Testament books of Malachi, Isaiah, and Exodus. Mark's description of John as an ascetic, living in the desert, clothed in camel hair, and eating locusts and wild honey, is reminiscent of the description of the prophet Elijah found in Second Kings. The people of Judea and Jerusalem flock to him, listening to his message of repentance and forgiveness; they also come to him to be baptized. Mark's Gospel is clear, however, that John the Baptist's role is only to prepare the way for another who will come, one who is greater than John.

Many scholars believe that the Gospels reflect the tension that likely existed between followers of John the Baptist and disciples of Jesus. Each of the four Evangelists report on John's preaching and baptizing, and they each emphasize the importance of Jesus' baptism by John. The four Gospels also explain that John was sent to preach in preparation for another. In the Gospel of Luke, the question is raised as to whether John the Baptist was himself the Messiah. Just as in today's Gospel, however, John speaks quite explicitly that the Messiah was to come after him.

In today's Gospel we hear John the Baptist contrast his baptism of repentance with the baptism that Jesus will inaugurate. John says that he has baptized with water, but that the one who is to come will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John's baptism was not yet a Christian baptism, but a preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism through which sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received.

John the Baptist is presented to us as a model during Advent. We, too, are called upon to prepare a way for the Lord. Like John the Baptist, we are messengers in service to one who is greater than we are. Our Baptism commissions us to call others to life as disciples of Jesus.

**Family Connection:** The season of Advent invites us to renew our lives in preparation for the coming of Jesus. The people who heard the message of John the Baptist repented for their sins and were baptized as a sign of God's forgiveness. In Baptism, our sins are forgiven, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, who helps us in our life of discipleship. Led by the Holy Spirit, we use this Advent season to renew our lives so that we, like John the Baptist, might prepare the way for Jesus.

As you gather together as a family, talk about ways in which the example of others has called you to be a follower of Jesus. Name the people who have been examples to you of Christian discipleship and describe their characteristics that you have tried to emulate. Read together today's Gospel, Mark 1: 1-8.

As John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, Baptism commissions us to prepare the way of the Lord. The gift of the Holy Spirit leads us to continually renew our lives so that we might lead others to Jesus. As a family, identify at least one action that you will take this week to try to be more faithful followers of Jesus. Conclude in prayer together that God will receive this action and use it to lead others to Jesus. Pray the [Prayer to the Holy Spirit](#).

For more information and Sunday Connection resources visit:

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/second-sunday-of-advent-cycle-b-sunday-connection/>

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# SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



## The Path

God of power and might,  
you sent the prophets Elijah, Isaiah,  
and John the Baptist  
to call your people to the path  
of righteousness.  
When we wander off,  
you seek us out and lead us back.  
Guide us onto the right path.  
Remove the obstacles that block our way.

Strengthen us to continue forward in faith  
and hope.  
Protect us from all that endangers us.  
Compel us to support each other when  
we stumble or falter.  
Help us to walk the path of holiness more  
quickly every day  
until we are running with joy into  
your kingdom.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Sunday, December 6, 2020**

**Hasten the Day**



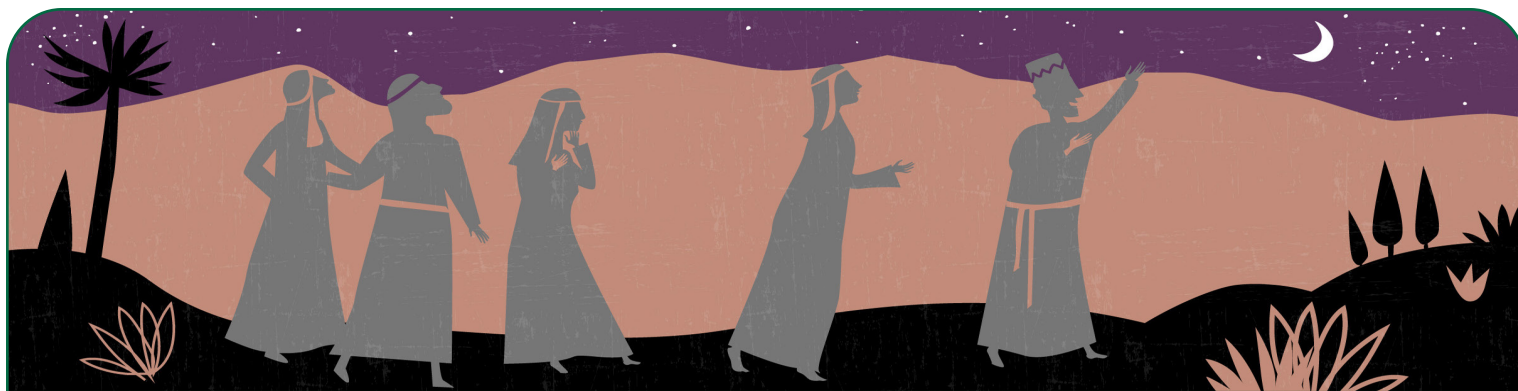
*Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:1–5, 9–11; Psalm 85:9–10, 11–12, 13–14; 2 Peter 3:8–14; Mark 1:1–8.* All three readings today urge us to participate in the completion of God's reign. God tells Isaiah to speak words of consolation. God's people had sinned, and as a result they had been defeated by a foreign nation and scattered from their homeland. God declares that he has forgiven them and is bringing them safely back. The glorious restoration of God's people, however, will only be possible if they turn back to God and undertake the journey home.

John the Baptist declares that the Lord's day is coming whether people want it to or not, but he also insists that people can prepare themselves for it. They can acknowledge

their sins so as to receive God's mercy and be empowered by God's Spirit when the Lord comes.

Remarkably, in our Second Reading, we are told not only to prepare, but that by striving to live as holy, faithful people, we bring God's kingdom closer to completion. For those who wonder why Christ has not yet returned in glory, St. Peter replies that God is giving us time to repent. The more quickly we allow God's Spirit to work within us, the sooner God will transform our world. We depend on God for "new heavens and a new earth," but when God sees that we are preparing ourselves and helping others to prepare for this transformation, he will hasten the day of his Son's return.





## THIS WEEK AT HOME

### Monday, December 7 St. Ambrose of Milan

God will heal his people of all that afflicts them so that they will return to their homeland and begin their lives anew. The man whom Jesus heals in the Gospel passage is also given a new life. How will we live differently when we encounter God's healing and mercy? St. Ambrose's life changed dramatically when the people of Milan asked him to become their bishop. He wasn't even baptized, but he accepted the new path that God laid out for him. May we do the same. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 35:1–10; Psalm 85:9ab and 10, 11–12, 13–4; Luke 5:17–26.*

### Tuesday, December 8 Immaculate Conception

Our belief that God kept Mary free from sin in order to bear the sinless Son of God sets Mary apart from us. For some, Mary is too perfect to be relatable. The Second Reading reminds us that God planned for all of us to be holy. God overshadows us with his Spirit so that we, too, will live according to his will. Carefully read through today's Gospel. Then imagine the angel Gabriel appearing to you. What does God ask of you? How do you respond? *Today's Readings: Genesis 3:9–20; Psalm 98:1–4; Ephesians 1:3–6; 11–12; Luke 1:26–38.*

### Wednesday, December 9 Yoked

When Jesus urges us to yoke ourselves to him, we might think we are the oxen and he is walking behind us, steering us. Instead, he probably means that he is yoked alongside us, sharing the weight of whatever we are pulling. As we hear in the First Reading, God so lightens our burdens and strengthens us that we seem to have wings. Every few hours, imagine Jesus walking beside you, listening and supporting you. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:25–31; Psalm 103:1–2, 3–4, 8 and 10; Matthew 11:28–30.*

### Thursday, December 10 Obstacles

God tells his people that they will cut through the mountains that block their path as they return home after being scattered by war. This time of renewal points ahead to the kingdom that Jesus brings. Those who strive to enter God's kingdom will also face obstacles, but their faithful perseverance will bring them into the fullness of God's reign. Offer people a glimpse of God's kingdom by volunteering at or donating to a local food pantry. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 41:13–20; Psalm 145:1 and 9, 10–11, 12–13ab; Matthew 11:11–15.*

### Friday, December 11 Wisdom

In the Old Testament, God's wisdom is personified as Lady Wisdom. She dwells among people, teaches them, and draws them down the path of righteousness. Jesus both teaches and embodies God's wisdom. Despite the crowd's refusal to believe it, Jesus is doing the work of God. He remains with us today, guiding us down the path of righteousness. The Book of Proverbs 10–29 is a collection of wise sayings. Choose several that apply to you, and bring them into your prayer. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 48:17–19; Psalm 1:1–6; Matthew 11:16–19.*

### Saturday, December 12 Our Lady of Guadalupe

The angel greeted Mary by calling her "favored one." This term implied that Mary had a patron who had commissioned her for some kind of work. Since Mary was a young woman from an insignificant village and God was her patron, she was understandably worried about what she could do for God. As it turned out, she could do a great deal. Just as God favored her, so she revealed God's favor to others, such as the indigenous people of Mexico. What do you need Our Lady of Guadalupe to reveal to you? *Today's Readings: Zechariah 2:14–17 or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab; Luke 1:26–38 or Luke 1:39–47.*

