

you will reach the perfect goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for the glory and praise of God.

■ The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Lk 3:4, 6

Alleluia, alleluia!

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

**GOSPEL**

Lk 3:1-6

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

*All people shall see the salvation of God.*

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.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

**A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL**



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# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT / C

8 DECEMBER 2024

## PREPARE A WAY FOR THE LORD

Today's Gospel places us squarely within history and competing political leadership. Luke introduces us to the ascetic and enigmatic figure of John the Baptist. There are four elements to Luke's presentation of John. He comes into Luke's Gospel within the context of imperial power, local politics and religious leadership; he proclaims a baptism 'of repentance'; his ministry reflects the liberating words of the ancient prophet, Isaiah, to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Significantly, God's word comes to John in the wilderness. This is the symbolic place of nothingness and struggle. It's a marginal and liminal space and links to Israel's encounter with God in their forty years' wanderings.

These four aspects about John speak to us: We seek to live our contemporary discipleship with authenticity and fidelity within a world of power politics and church struggles; we, too, find ourselves at times in life's 'wilderness'—that symbol of struggle and nothingness; at the same time, we seek to honour our baptismal commitment as we desire to orient our lives towards God; we prepare ourselves, in the spirit of Isaiah, for the coming of our Messiah, Jesus.

This Sunday might become a time to invite John the Baptist to be our companion in preparing our hearts for the birth of Jesus. In the words of Isaiah, we are invited this Sunday to 'Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight'. We ready our hearts for God's coming to us in the anticipated birth of Jesus.

Fr Michael Trainor

## FIRST READING

Bar 5:1-9

A reading from the prophet Baruch.

*Jerusalem – God will show you splendour.*

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.

■ The word of the Lord.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 125. R. v. 3

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

1. 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.**



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

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

4. 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.**

## SECOND READING

Phil 1:3-6, 8-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians.

*Show yourselves sinless and without blame in the day of Christ.*

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