

GOSPEL

Mt 3:1-12

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said:

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.

This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father," because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand; he will clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.'

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT / A

7 DECEMBER 2025

CHANGE ONE'S THINKING

Today, John the Baptist arrives to assist us in our Advent preparation. Matthew presents him as a figure from Israel's wilderness. From this setting John invites Matthew's audience, and us, to repentance. There are three things about the Gospel's opening verses that are important to note. First, the 'wilderness' was a place of nothingness. Israel encountered God in its forty year's desert wanderings. Often our own lives are filled with desert wanderings and nothingness. We sometimes feel the loneliness of our lives and perhaps, at times, directionless. Contemplating our personal wilderness can be a fruitful place to begin our Advent preparation.

Second, from the wilderness comes the call to repentance. John says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This is a powerful message. The word, 'repent' comes from the Greek, 'metanoia', a combination of two Greek words, 'meta' + 'noia'. 'Meta' is the basic root word in English linked to 'change' (metamorphosis, metabolism). 'Noia' is the root for the English 'knowledge'. In other words, John's first call to 'repent' literally means (from the Greek) to 'change one's thinking', to be open minded and not hard hearted. It is a challenging call to us as we enter into this new time of the year.

Third, John reminds us to be aware that 'the kingdom of heaven has come near'. It is not distant but close and present; it is among us, a repetitive theme throughout the Gospel, flagged in two Sunday's time, in the birth of the child called 'Emmanuel', 'God with us'. We need today, more than ever, this God to be with us.

Fr Michael Trainor

FIRST READING

Isa 11:1-10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

He judges the poor with justice.

A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse, a scion thrusts from his roots: on him the spirit of the Lord rests, a spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (The fear of the Lord is his breath.) He does not judge by appearances, he gives no verdict on hearsay, but judges the wretched with integrity, and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land.

His word is a rod that strikes the ruthless; his sentences bring death to the wicked. Integrity is the loincloth round his waist, faithfulness the belt about his hips.

The wolf lives with the lamb, the panther lies down with the kid, calf and lion cub feed together with a little boy to lead them. The cow and the bear make friends, their young lie down together. The lion eats straw like the ox. The infant plays over the cobra's hole; into the viper's lair the young child puts his hand. They do no hurt, no harm, on all my holy mountain, for the country is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters swell the sea.

That day, the root of Jesse shall stand as signal to the peoples. It will be sought out by the nations and its home will be glorious.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESP PS

Ps 71:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17. R. cf. v. 7

R. Justice shall flourish in his time, and fullness of peace for ever.

1. O God, give your judgement to the king, / to a king's son your justice, / that he may judge your people in justice / and your poor in right judgement. **R.**

2. In his days justice shall flourish / and peace till the moon fails. / He shall rule from sea to sea, / from the Great River to earth's bounds. **R.**

3. For he shall save the poor when they cry / and the needy who are helpless. / He will have



pity on the weak / and save the lives of the poor. **R.**

4. May his name be blessed for ever / and endure like the sun. / Every tribe shall be blessed in him, / all nations bless his name. **R.**

SECOND READING

Rom 15:4-9

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Christ, the hope of all people.

Everything that was written long ago in the scriptures was meant to teach us something about hope from the examples scripture gives of how people who did not give up were helped by God. And may he who helps us when we refuse to give up, help you all to be tolerant with each other, following the example of Christ Jesus, so that united in mind and voice you may give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It can only be to God's glory, then, for you to treat each other in the same friendly way as Christ treated you. The reason Christ became the servant of circumcised Jews was not only so that God could faithfully carry out the promises made to the patriarchs, it was also to get the pagans to give glory to God for his mercy, as scripture says in one place: For this I shall praise you among the pagans and sing your name.

■ **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!