

Second Sunday of Advent

10th December 2023



Prepare a way for the Lord.

Isaiah 40



We could all benefit from some good news and this Sunday's Gospel brings this in abundance. It tells us of the Good News which was prophesied in the Old Testament book of Isaiah—that the Messiah is coming and it gives us this detail by sharing the story of John the Baptist who travelled around preparing people for Jesus. John the Baptist, whose ministry, some scholars tell us, lasted only about three months comes to us and tells us to repent. But for thirty years, John's life had been leading up to this short period of ninety days during which he would build a path for the Messiah.

The Scripture tells us that the chief way John did this was to call on his hearers to "repent." He modelled that in his own life by saying he was not even worthy to carry the sandals of the One Who was to come.

If we are really to be part of the Advent season, we have to turn to John as a model. How do we "make straight the way" for the return of our Lord?

As John tells us, this is through repentance. The call to repent is simply the invitation to change the directions of our lives that may run contrary to the path to Christ. It doesn't always mean a 180 degree turn, it may be a small re-direction onto the right path. At the same time it may indeed call us to radically change the entire direction of our lives. What repentance does mean, is that we are willing to admit our mistakes, offer them over to God, accept the consequences of our actions and leave behind those persons or things damaging to our relationship with God.

This week let us pray for:

- ◆ strength and support for all those facing difficulties;
- ◆ For Iain Rylands and Michaela Waterfield's family and friends;
- ◆ our preparations for the coming of Christ;
- ◆ all those connected to our community who are unwell, upset or mourning.



This week, the Church asks us to offer our thanks and prayers for the Word of God, which enlightens us and educates us all.

Blessed Lord,

*who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:
help us so to hear them, to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them,
that, through patience, and the comfort of Your holy Word,
we may embrace and for ever hold fast the hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen*

God of hope

*be with us in our Advent journey
to the stable and beyond,
be with us in our meeting
and in our travelling together,
be with us in our worship
and our praying together,
be with us in our Advent journey
to the stable and beyond,
our God of hope. Amen*

Tuesday 8th December—Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Father,

You prepared the Virgin Mary
to be the worthy mother of Your son.

You let her share beforehand
in the salvation Christ would bring by his death,
and kept her sinless from the first moment of her conception.

Help us by her prayers to live in Your presence without sin.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen

*"It is the beautiful task of
Advent to awaken in all
of us memories of
goodness and thus to
open doors of hope."*

Pope Benedict