

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Fruition

Holy Lord,
from your Chosen People came
a royal descendant,
a righteous ruler, a Savior filled with
your Spirit.
In him you reveal your perfect
and powerful love,
a love that encompasses all people.
Through your Son, you liberate the world

from hatred, injustice, and violence,
so that all creation may know true harmony
and lasting peace.

By the power of the Holy Spirit,
grant us wisdom, strength, patience
and mercy.

Grant us the gifts we need to bear good fruit
and to be signs that your kingdom has begun.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 8, 2019

Busy Waiting

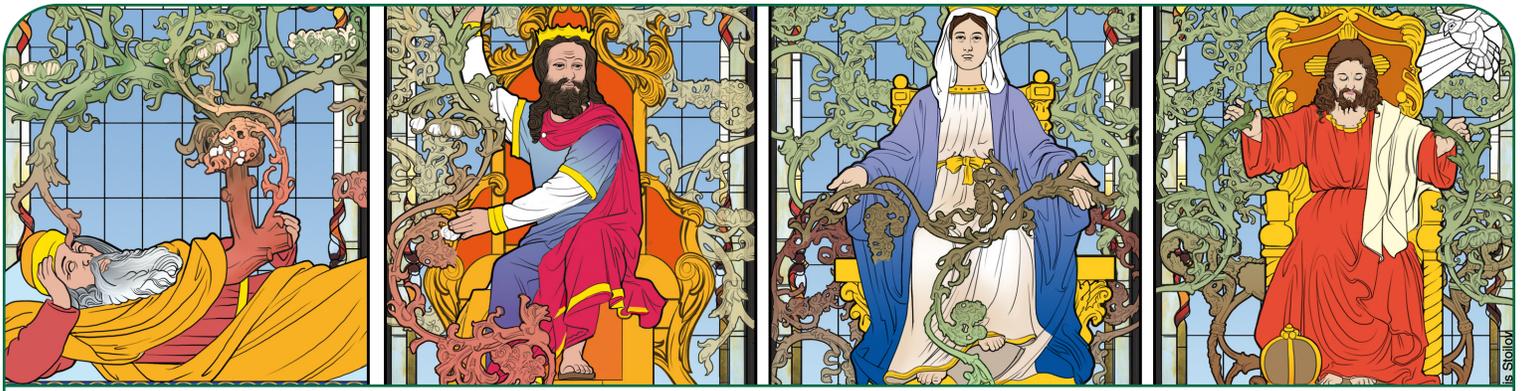


Today's Readings: Isaiah 11:1–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 12–13, 17; Romans 15:4–9; Matthew 3:1–12. John the Baptist warned people to change their lives or be excluded from God's kingdom. His water ritual was a way for people to show that they believed him, but it wasn't the only sign they were to give. When some Jewish religious leaders said they wanted to be baptized, John demanded that they prove it. These leaders thought that, simply because they were Jewish, God would include them in his kingdom.

We cannot claim that our Christian Baptism guarantees us a place in God's kingdom, either. In the Second Reading, St. Paul makes it clear that although God has extended salvation to all, both Jews and Gentiles must treat one another

with patience, mercy, and love. Everyone who wants to live in a world without violence or pain, danger or devastation, must surrender to God's Spirit, just as Jesus did.

Sometimes we think of Advent as a season of waiting for God, but John the Baptist reminds us that God is waiting for us, too. God waits for us to blossom into holiness, to spring up with deeds of love. If we don't get busy preparing for God's arrival, "the ax lies at the root of the trees." But if we demonstrate our sincere desire to turn toward the Lord, we become signs for others to follow. And then, with Christ in our midst, "the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord" and God's kingdom "shall be glorious."



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 9 Immaculate Conception

It is impossible for us to prevent sin from passing into the next generation. We see how quickly children imitate us and our sins. In the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception, we celebrate a moment in which God kept someone free from sin so that she could be mother to the sinless Son of God. This perfect Son, who came into our world as an infant, gives us hope that one day our children will perfectly imitate our Savior. Ask God to forgive you for a time that a child saw or heard you act sinfully. *Today's Readings: Genesis 3:9–20; Psalm 98:1–4; Ephesians 1:3–12; Luke 1:26–38.*

Tuesday, December 10 Shepherding the Lost

Jesus offered consolation and forgiveness instead of immediate condemnation. He looked upon God's people differently than they looked upon themselves. Where some saw only hopeless sinners, Jesus saw people who yearned to be led back to God. Show that you are ready for God to find you by asking someone for forgiveness and by letting go of a grudge. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:1–11; Psalm 96:1–3, 10–13; Matthew 18:12–14.*

Wednesday, December 11 Burdens

God helps us carry our burdens. He lifts us up when our bodies drag us down. He yokes himself beside us in the person of his Son. We must, therefore, ask ourselves what burdens we ought to carry and what loads we can set down. Our arms might be full of things we do not need to hold onto. Check your Christmas to-do list, and cross off anything that doesn't truly help you and others prepare to celebrate the gift of God's Son. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 40:25–31; Psalm 103:1–10; Matthew 11:28–30.*

Thursday, December 12 The Faces of Grace

The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrates Mary's appearance to Juan Diego, an appearance that inspired thousands to convert to Christianity. Many have venerated since childhood the image of Mary that was revealed to Juan Diego. We rejoice that God makes himself known across cultures and languages. Pray with an image of Mary or Jesus from a different part of the world, and reflect on God's love for all people, everywhere. *Today's Readings: Zechariah 2:14–17 or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab; Luke 1:26–38 or Luke 1:39–47.*

Friday, December 13 Expectations

Sometimes we refuse to see God at work. We dismiss a teaching or invitation from God because it doesn't fit our expectations of how God should act. We might even think it is foolish. Jesus insists that what seems silly to us is wise to God. It seemed absurd that God would become human, yet that's exactly what happened. God's way is difficult for us to accept, but it is the only way for us to become one with God who came to be one with us. Make a list of things you expect from God, and surrender that list in prayer. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 48:17–19; Psalm 1:1–6; Matthew 11:16–19.*

Saturday, December 14 Turn

We read in 2 Kings 2:11 that the prophet Elijah was taken up to heaven. In the centuries that followed, people came to believe that Elijah would return to prepare people for the day of judgment and a new era. The most significant similarity between Elijah and John the Baptist was that both devoted themselves to turning people back to God. In this season of preparation, the words of Elijah and John echo in our ears. Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Acknowledge the ways you have turned away from God, and renew your efforts to turn back to him. *Today's Readings: Sirach 48:1–11; Psalm 80:1–19; Matthew 17:9–13.*

