

# Week 2: Love



## Opening prayer

As we light the second candle on our Advent wreath, we rejoice in God's love for us and our love for each other. Lord, help us to share your love.

*(Light the first and second candle on your Advent wreath.)*

## Scripture

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

*Look, I am going to send my messenger before you;  
he will prepare your way.*

*A voice cries in the wilderness:*

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

and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said,

"Someone is following me, someone more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:1-8)

## Reflection

The Gospel of Mark does not include a story of Jesus' birth. Instead, it opens with a very different scene — the arresting figure of John the Baptist in the wilderness, announcing the kingdom and calling people to repentance.

In the wilderness, on the margins of society, John offers faithful witness to the ongoing work of God. He draws attention, not to himself, but to Christ; the one who is to come and whose sandal strap he feels he is unworthy to undo.

As we listen to these words of John, our mind may turn to a scene three years later. An upper room, where Christ kneels on a dusty floor and undoes the straps of his friends'

sandals to wash the dirt from their feet. In this act of gentle service, Jesus reveals to us the heart of God and shows us how to give our own lives in love.

## For discussion

- What makes you feel loved? How do you share love with others?
- John the Baptist talks about “repentance”, which describes a change of mind and heart. What change of mind or heart could help you walk more in God’s way of love?
- In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis writes: “By its very nature, love calls for growth in openness and the ability to accept others as part of a continuing adventure that makes every periphery converge in a greater sense of mutual belonging. As Jesus told us: “You are all brothers” (Mt 23:8).” #95  
What might this mean for us as individuals and as a community?

## Closing prayer

We repent and are sorry  
for the damage we have caused  
to our earth and one another.  
*Come, Lord, bearer of love.*

Guide us as we seek  
to straighten the paths of injustice  
and prepare a way for you.  
*Come, Lord, bearer of love.*

Lead us in your ways,  
as together we make a change  
and reach out in love to others.  
*Come, Lord, bearer of love.*

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