

Week 2: Peace

Opening prayer

God of mercy,
lead us to prepare a way for the coming of your Son.
Forgive us for the times we have gone wrong,
open our ears to hear the voices of those
who cry out for peace and justice,
and encourage us to make your paths straight.
(Light the second candle in your Advent wreath)

Scripture (Mark 1:1-8)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,
the voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’”

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt round his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.”

Reflection

John the Baptist comes to fulfil Isaiah's prophecy. He is the voice calling in the wilderness, preparing a way for the Lord. He calls for people to repent and to change their ways so that they will be ready to receive the one who comes after him.

During Advent, we are also called to hear this message. It is a moment to take stock, to turn away from what we know is not right and be open to God's forgiveness. A time to work together for peace.

Let us consider then, whose voices do we hear calling out to us this Advent? Who are the people drawing our attention to the change that needs to happen in our world? How can we amplify their messages and what change will we make in our own lives to prepare a way for the Lord?

For discussion

- + Repentance is about a change of mind and heart. What change of mind or heart could help you prepare a way for the Lord this week?
- + What paths need to be straightened in our world today? Where do you see unjust situations or systems?
- + How will you follow the example of John the Baptist and raise your voice to speak out for what is right and important?

Closing prayer

We repent and are sorry
for the damage we have caused
to our earth and one another.

Come, Lord, Prince of Peace.

Guide us as we seek
to straighten the paths of injustice
and prepare a way for you.

Come, Lord, Prince of Peace.

Lead us in your ways
as together we make a change
so all people may live in peace.

Come, Lord, Prince of Peace.