



# Christ in Our Neighborhood



CYCLE A

## Prayer

Loving Lord God, as we pray, “Thy kingdom come,” grant us the courage to follow Your Son Jesus in being a channel of peace and joy. Enlighten us to see those areas that need transformation. May we accept John the Baptist’s message to repent, for Your kingdom is at hand. Amen.

## Commentary

### 2nd Reading: Romans 15:4-9

Much like Isaiah, Paul addressed the Roman community during their own difficulties. He realized that they were living in trying times that he described as the birth pangs of a new creation. They have few choices about their times.

## Commentary

### 1st Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

The prophet Isaiah lived during a very troubled time in Israel. During his lifetime the Assyrians annihilated all the area north of Jerusalem known as the northern Kingdom.

Jerusalem lived in fear and trembling that they would be next. Isaiah did not spare his condemnation of those who contributed to all that suffering. He condemned not only the Assyrians but also the kings of Israel who led the people away from God and also the people who followed their lead.

In the reading today, he gives hope to those who remained faithful to God. He promises that God would send a leader who would lead them to justice and peace.

Isaiah proclaimed hope despite the terrible things that were happening. God had promised Abraham and his descendants blessings in spite of dark times. God keeps His promises! The hope Isaiah held was to be realized in Jesus Christ!

## Question

When we lose hope, do we put trust in the promise of God that his grace will overpower any doubts that may be present?

# 2nd Sunday of Advent

Paul’s readers could either allow circumstances to defeat their faith or they could continue in hope motivated by their faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul calls the community of Rome to live faith with endurance and find encouragement in Scripture. He proclaims they can’t go it alone. The deepening of their faith in Christ must be discovered in community.

They are urged to live in harmony with each other as Christ offers His grace in difficult times. If they accept Paul’s advice, they will never lose hope!

## Questions

During Advent how does my involvement in the community assist my journey of faith?

How can I live in better harmony with others during Advent?

Bring someone back to the Church by inviting him or her to break open the Word of God through *Christ in Our Neighborhood*.

How will you share Christ in your own neighborhood this week and grow closer to God?

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Download free PDFs for your parish groups or family gatherings!

## Commentary

### Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

John the Baptist takes center stage in this Second Week of Advent.

John's mission was to remind the people of the promises of old. Relying on his religious traditions, John preached that God would soon intervene but preparation had to be made. "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

John was asking each person to judge his or her own life, separating the weeds from grain, to be ready for what was to come through Christ.

Three times John refers to repentance as the beginning of preparation. Repentance meant "to change mind and heart to become a better person." It also meant to change behavior. "Produce good fruit as evidence of repentance."

John gives hope because the one who will come, Jesus, will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

## Question

How will repentance affect my spiritual growth during Advent and lead me to Christmas?

## This Week's Task

Hope is the message for this Second Week of Advent. For our time, Pope Francis may be the loudest voice of hope. Consider reading *Laudato Si* on "Care for Our Common Home," or simply pray sometime this week the following:

*"Triune God, wondrous community of infinite love, awaken our praise and thankfulness for every being that You have made. Give us the grace to feel profound respect for all of Your creation. God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of Your love. O Lord, seize us with Your power and light. Help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of Your kingdom of justice, peace, love, and beauty."*

## Group Prayer

The group offers the following by Henry Alvord (1810-1871):

We may not touch  
his hands and side,  
Nor follow where he trod;  
Yet in his promise we rejoice  
And cry "My Lord and God!"

Continue with Psalm 72

## Psalm

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

O God, with your judgment endow the king,  
and with your justice, the king's son;  
he shall govern your people with justice  
and your afflicted ones with judgment.

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

Justice shall flower in his days,  
and profound peace, till the moon be no more.  
May he rule from sea to sea,  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

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

For he shall rescue the poor when he cries out,  
and the afflicted when he has no one to help him.  
He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor;  
the lives of the poor he shall save.

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

May his name be blessed forever;  
as long as the sun his name shall remain.  
In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed;  
all the nations shall proclaim his happiness.

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

**Conclude with an Our Father**