

## MARK 1:1-8

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 Judaea 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.

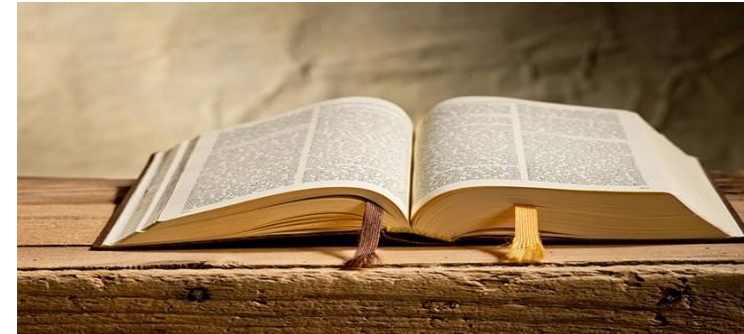
In the course of his preaching he said, ‘Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.’

**COMMENTARY: The ultimate surprise of God for the people of Israel is the gift of Jesus Christ. Who could ever have imagined God letting go of his divinity to enter our humanity. We need to bear this in mind as we read the words of John the Baptist. Firstly, we must seek this Saviour, and listen to his call in the depths of our being. Openness and a willingness to discover is how we prepare. Then we acknowledge our sins in a spirit of humility and pray we understand the depth of what it means to be baptised.**

## Liturgy of The Word

**2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**10.12.23**



**Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us  
your salvation.**

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,  
a voice that speaks of peace,  
peace for his people.

His help is near for those who fear him  
and his glory will dwell in our land.

Mercy and faithfulness have met;  
justice and peace have embraced.  
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth  
and justice look down from heaven.

The Lord will make us prosper  
and our earth shall yield its fruit.  
Justice shall march before him  
and peace shall follow his steps.

## **ISAIAH 40:1-5,9-11**

‘Console my people, console them’ says your God.  
‘Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her  
that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for,  
that she has received from the hand of the Lord  
double punishment for all her crimes.’

A voice cries, ‘Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord.  
Make a straight highway for our God across the desert.  
Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low.  
Let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley;  
then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed  
and all humankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’

Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion.  
Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem.  
Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah,  
‘Here is your God.’

Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him.

The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him.  
He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms,  
holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother  
ewes.

**COMMENTARY: The secret in this text is the double command God is giving in the first line: “Console”. No longer will it be difficult to find God. The richness of this reading will be seen if we apply it to Jesus Christ. In each of the paragraphs bear the incarnation in mind while reading: God entering our humanity.**

## **2 PETER 3:8-14**

There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, ‘a day’ can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up.

Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heavens and new earth, the place where righteousness will be at home. So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.

**COMMENTARY: The imagery of the surprising nature of God, being described as ‘like a thief in the night’ is common in several parts of scripture. Even now with our knowledge of Christ, we struggle to be free of the malaise that causes us to just coast along, or even forget entirely that God is at work in our lives, in our society and in our Church. Many have said, ‘our problem is that we just don’t believe in the depth of God’s love for humanity’. People of real faith know that God is a God who unfolds life for us in a way we could never have planned or imagined.**