



HORIZON OF HOPE

The Second
Sunday

They Acknowledged Their Sins

Mark 1:1-8

John the Baptist appears in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah that a messenger would appear ahead of the Messiah. One of his messages was to acknowledge humanity's sinful nature and encourage repentance. This same call is extended to each of us this Advent.



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POINTS TO PONDER

- How can I use this Advent season as a way to grow more deeply in my faith?
- How long has it been since my last confession?
- Am I more caught up in the cultural expression of the “holiday season” than I am of the “holy day season”?

The Jordan River runs through the hot and harsh landscape of the Judean desert. Why would John choose such a distant locale to proclaim the coming of the Messiah? Perhaps it is precisely because the area is so desolate. There, away from all the distractions of everyday life, the people were able to focus on what really mattered and acknowledge their own sinfulness. Stripped of all the comforts of home and family, they could look at their lives and feel the pressing need for salvation.

Similarly, during this Second Week of Advent, we are called away from the lures that the season places before us to consider that God so loves each of us that he was willing to send his only son for our salvation.

“Advent is here. What a marvelous time in which to renew your desire, your nostalgia, your real longing for Christ to come — for him to come every day to your soul in the Eucharist. The Church encourages us: Ecce veniet! — He is about to arrive!”

— Saint Josemaría Escrivá



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FAMILY FOCUS

A Taste of the Season

Be with us, Lord, as we continue in this waiting season of Advent.

We thank you for the many blessings in our lives, and with anticipation, preparation, and hope, we look forward to the arrival of your son, Jesus, the light of the world.

Amen.



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Special sweets are a part of many families' Advent preparations. One all-time favorite is the candy cane with its distinctive red and white stripes. As you enjoy the peppermint flavor, explain to your family the meaning behind this sugary treat:

- The white base represents the Virgin Birth and the sinless nature of Jesus.
- The red stripes indicate the blood shed by Jesus on the cross for our salvation.
- The "J" shape reminds us of the name of Jesus, as well as the staff of the Good Shepherd.

HEROES OF HOPE

SAINT LUCY

Saint Lucy is one of only eight women saints mentioned by name in the Mass. Her name, Lucia, comes from the Latin word for light. Before the reform of the Gregorian calendar in the Middle Ages, her feast fell on the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, and heralded the return of longer, lighter days. Even now, she is associated with light and fire. In the Scandinavian countries, especially Norway and Sweden, on Saint Lucy's feast day, the youngest daughter of the family wears a crown of lighted candles (now often battery powered) and serves special rolls and cookies to her family at dawn. In parts of Italy, her feast is commemorated with homemade pasta and a dessert called *cuccia*, made of wheat berries in hot chocolate. *Saint Lucy, pray for us!*

Feast Day:
December 13



SIGNS OF THE SEASON

The Legend of the Poinsettia

The brilliant red leaves of the poinsettia are a common decoration at this time of year. Its association with Christmas began many years ago when the story developed of Pepita, a poor Mexican girl who had no gift for the Christ Child at Christmas. Her cousin Pedro told her that even the most humble gift given in love is a welcomed present. So, Pepita gathered a handful of weeds into a small bouquet. As she laid it at the foot of the crèche, it burst into blooms of red. From that day on, the poinsettia has also been known as the *Flor de Nochebuena*, or Flower of the Holy Night (Christmas Eve).

Come, O Lord!

“Attend to the sound of my cry, / my king and my God! / For to you I will pray.”

— Psalm 5:3