



HORIZON OF HOPE

The Third
Sunday

Make Straight the Way of the Lord

John 1:6-8,19-28

When the priests and Levites demanded to know who John was, he didn't answer them in the way they wanted. Instead, he quoted Isaiah, saying that he was "the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord."

Throughout this Sunday's Gospel, we are reminded that we must be willing to embark on a journey if we want to come to the Faith. God sends John into the desert. The Jews from Jerusalem send priests and Levites to talk to John. The Pharisees send some of their own people to question him. And, finally, John says that the Messiah will be sent after him. Not only that, people had to travel out to the desert if they wanted to experience John's baptism of repentance.

One of the lessons for this Third Week of Advent is that if we want to meet the Lord, we need to be willing to seek him. We must go out into the deserts of our lives with the expectation that we will find Jesus there. However, we must also be willing to "see" him. As John said, "there is one among you whom you do not recognize."

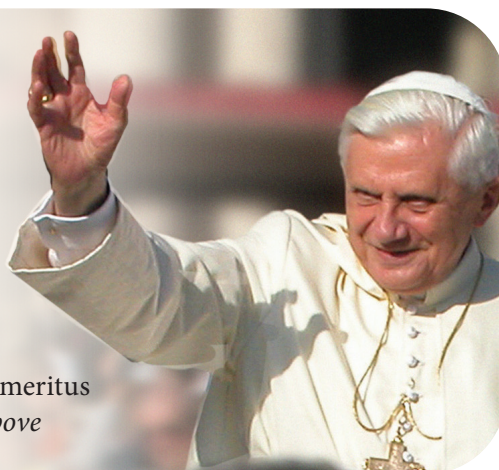
As we begin the final stages of Advent preparation, may we be "witnesses to the light," and may our hearts and minds turn more fully to the coming of the Christ this week.



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"Advent's intention is to awaken the most profound and basic emotional memory within us, namely, the memory of the God who became a child. This is a healing memory; it brings hope."

— Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI), *Seek That Which Is Above*



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POINTS TO PONDER

- Where am I in my journey of faith this Advent?
- What are some ways that I can express the joy of Gaudete Sunday with my family and friends?
- What is one thing I can commit to praying about this Advent season?

ADVENT PRAYER

Come, O Lord!

“In joy you shall go forth, in peace you shall be brought home.” — Isaiah 55:12

Lord, lead me and I will follow!

Catechism CONNECTION

“At the announcement that she would give birth to ‘the Son of the Most High’ without knowing man, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary responded with the obedience of faith, certain that ‘with God nothing will be impossible’: ‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be [done] to me according to your word.’ Thus, giving her consent to God’s word, Mary becomes the mother of Jesus.” — *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 494

FAMILY FOCUS

Advent Around the World

This year, add a little international flavor to your Advent with these family activities from around the world.

INDIA Mango leaves are typically used for Advent decorations in India, and instead of decorating pines trees, mango and banana trees are trimmed.



Add a bowl of mangoes and small white lights, which recall the Star of Bethlehem, to your table.

PHILIPPINES Advent is marked by attending Mass nine days in a row (called *Simbág Gabi*, “night mass,” or *Misas de Aguinaldo*, “gift Masses”), starting on December 16. If you can’t make it to Mass all nine days, try to attend at least a few days of daily Mass.



EUROPE In Alpine countries, children carry a statue of Saint Joseph to a different home each night during Advent. Carry the statue of Joseph from your crèche to each child’s room where it will spend the night and then move on the next day. On Christmas Eve, put Joseph next to Mary in the stable.

HEROES OF HOPE

SAINT PETER CANISIUS

Advent is an ideal time of year to talk about the Faith and invite those who do not believe to consider the mystery of God-made-man in Jesus Christ. It is fitting that we celebrate the feast of Saint Peter Canisius this week, because he was a great evangelist.

A Jesuit preacher during the time of the Protestant reformation, he became a major factor in the restoration of the Catholic Church in Germany. Like Pope Francis, he believed in treating those who disagree with the teaching of the Church with kindness and patience. His devotion to Mary was a hallmark of his ministry, and he is credited with adding the words “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners” to the Hail Mary. *Saint Peter Canisius, pray for us!*

*Feast Day:
December 21*



SIGNS OF THE SEASON

In the Pink

Deep purple is the liturgical color for Advent — except for the third Sunday, which is Gaudete Sunday. This week the liturgical vestments and the candle in the Advent wreath are a rosy pink to highlight the joy that the Lord’s coming is almost here. The name derives from the Latin words of the Introit to the Mass: “*Gaudete in Domino semper; iterum dico, gaudete*”: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice!”