



# A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

The Second  
Sunday

## Prepare the Way for the Lord

Luke 3:1-6

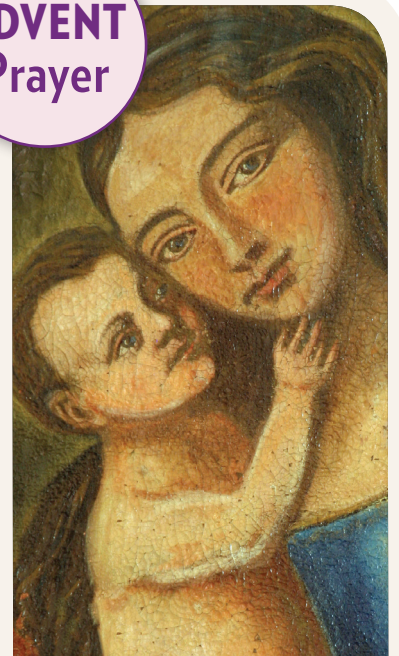
Would you join John the Baptist in going around the country to speak about repentance? It's challenging to imagine — asking people to consider the wrong that they've done, express remorse, and pledge to do differently.

Yet the message is critical for our salvation. In this Gospel reading, John travels and preaches just before Jesus begins his ministry, preparing the way for the Son of Man to challenge the commonly held ideas of right and wrong.

During Advent, we're preparing not only for the birth of Jesus at Christmas but also for the Second Coming of Christ. It's our calling to do so in our own hearts, in our families, in our communities, and in our world.

How will you do so? Perhaps your call is not to travel and preach. Perhaps your means of preparing the way is to give of time or money, do something active, meditate and pray at daily Mass, nurture faith in your children or in the children of a local homeless shelter, change global policy, or develop a relationship with one person whose heart is in need of repair.

ADVENT  
Prayer



**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.*







## Saint Paul

The second reading this weekend is from Philippians, written to Christians in the city of Philippi by Saint Paul while he was under house arrest for preaching the Gospel.

If you don't know much about Saint Paul, this is one person you'll definitely want to get to know. He began as a persecutor of Christians, and quite a good one at that. But in his famous conversion — he was struck blind while traveling to Damascus — he became one of Christianity's most fervent proponents.

Saint Paul was a talented writer, penning missive after missive to the early churches to encourage and inspire Christians while he traveled the countryside or spent time in prison. His letters make up a large portion of the New Testament and serve to inspire us today with not only his words, but also his own ability to repent and become one of God's shining lights in the world.



## Daily LIVING

“Waiting is a period of learning. The longer we wait, the more we hear about him for whom we are waiting.”

— Henri Nouwen

## FAMILY FOCUS

# A Manger Lined with Love

Make your efforts to prepare the way of the Lord tangible for everyone in your family. Set up a Nativity scene in a prominent spot in your home. Each day, as part of dinner or your Advent wreath

meditation, talk together about ways that you each did God's work in the world that day. Those actions might be grand,



community-wide gestures, or they might be small acts of exceptional kindness, or even acts of internal prayer. For each way in which you've prepared for Christ's coming, ask the children to add a piece of straw to the manger. In this way,

you're creating a soft bed for the arrival of Baby Jesus as well as a strong faith that brings Jesus' ministry to the world.

## Catechism CONNECTION

The central focus of the season is the coming of the Lord. Advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “coming.” The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* stresses a two-fold meaning: “When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior's first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming” (524).

## WAIT, WATCH and Wonder

Watch for signs of Jesus all around you each day. Watch for someone for which to hold a door for, shovel a neighbor's walk, or help carry something heavy. Watch for opportunities to say hello to someone who looks lonely, cheer up a crying child, or clean up a mess that you didn't make. Offer these moments up to Jesus in silent prayer. Watch for the first star of the evening one night, then read from the Bible the story of the star announcing Jesus' birth in Luke 2:1–20.

## FOR REFLECTION:

*What do I need to let go of this Advent season?*