

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.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Lk 3:4, 6

Alleluia, alleluia!

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mk 1:1-8

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Make straight the paths of the Lord.

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.'

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL



Reproduction of this bulletin in any form prohibited. Published with ecclesiastical approval by ST PAULS PUBLICATIONS, PO Box 906, Strathfield NSW 2135. Tel 02 9394 3400 Fax 02 9394 3444. Scripture readings from the Jerusalem Bible, published and © 1966, by Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd and Doubleday & Co. Inc. are used by permission of the publishers. Psalm text from *The Psalms, A New Translation*, © 1963, The Grail (England), HarperCollins. New translation of the Order of Mass from *The Roman Missal* © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved. Artwork by Sr Dorothy Woodward rsj. Layout, commentaries and illustrations © St Pauls Publications, 2020. No 1854. Website: www.stpauls.com.au

Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT / B

06 DECEMBER 2020

BELIEF IN GOD'S PROMISES

The life of faith is one in which the believer is inevitably called to deal with the tension between God's promises and our present experience. When the people of Israel were dragged into exile their experience was that their God was powerless to save and that the ancient promises had been forgotten. It is at precisely this moment that Isaiah dares to proclaim a message of hope in the midst of desolation, pardon instead of punishment, and that the God who can subdue all things will again stoop to gather the weak and lead them home.

Peter's Christians were clearly worried by the fact that the Risen Lord had not come back in glory as they expected. How could this be interpreted other than as a sign that God's plans had somehow changed, or that God no longer cares? Peter's response is that, despite appearances to the contrary, God's delay should be seen as an opportunity for us to make ready for the Lord's return. It is a moment of grace rather than a sign of God's lack of fruitfulness.

When John the Baptist declared that the longed-for Messiah was near, his contemporaries must have wondered if it was possible. How could this come to pass when the province of Judah was powerless under the rule of the Roman empire?

Advent is always a reminder that the call to believe comes to us in the midst of the complexity of life. It meets us head-on with a challenge: are we prepared to take the risk of believing in God's promises?

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

Isa 40:1-5, 9-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Prepare the way for the Lord.

'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 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 mankind 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.

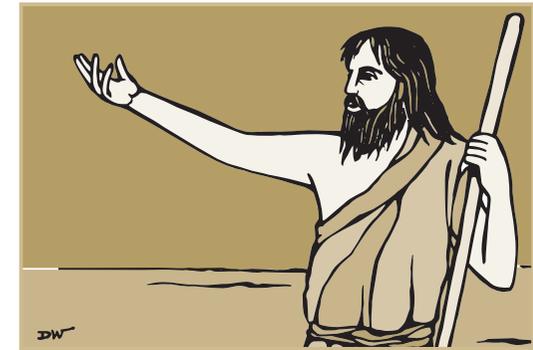
■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 84:9-14. R. v. 8

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

1. 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. **R.**



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

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

SECOND READING

2 Pet 3:8-14

A reading from the second letter of St Peter.

We wait for new heavens and a new earth.

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