

READINGS AND REFLECTION FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

A READING FROM THE PROPHET 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.’

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. 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. 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 victory is with him, his trophies 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 mother ewes.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 84: 9-14

I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace for his people. His help is near for those who fear him. His glory will dwell in our land.

LORD, LET US SEE YOUR KINDNESS, AND GRANT US YOUR SALVATION.

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

LORD, LET US SEE YOUR KINDNESS, AND GRANT US YOUR SALVATION.

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

LORD, LET US SEE YOUR KINDNESS, AND GRANT US YOUR SALVATION.

A READING FROM THE SECOND LETTER OF ST PETER 3:8-14

There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget; 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. He is patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody 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 earth. 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 friend, 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.

*Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.
All people shall see the salvation of God.*

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO 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.

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judah and all the people of Jerusalem make their way to him, and as they were baptized 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 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 baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD.

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REFLECTIONS ON THE INCARNATION'S IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT

"The mystery of the Incarnation is that God did not remain in the place that was proper for God

but moved to the condition of the suffering human being.

The great task we have been given is to walk the compassionate way.

Through the discipline of patience, practised in prayer and action, the life of discipleship becomes real and fruitful.

Henri Nouwen (1932-96) Dutch priest and theologian

"...if one has God truly within, one will find God at all times and in all places.

The operative word is 'if'.

Most of us will find, in practice, we will be unable to find God amid noise and activity until we have first found God in inwardness and stillness."

Meister Eckhart 13th Century philosopher, mystic.

"A life without prayer is a life which fails to acknowledge the essential dimension of existence.

It is a life which remains satisfied with what it sees,

without discovering the grandeur, the eternal aspect of human destiny."

Carlo Carretto (1910-1988) Italian mystic and writer.