

# 2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT



## Moving from Mourning and Misery

Loving God,  
you restore what we have broken.  
Amidst our struggles with sin,  
guide us in preparing the way;  
help us to see your salvation.  
Give us courage

to move on from mourning and misery.  
We rejoice,  
for you have done great things for us.  
As you directed the Israelites,  
lead us in joy by the light of your glory.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 8, 2024

Led by God in Joy



*Today's readings: Malachi 3:1-4; Psalm 126:1-6;  
Philippians 1:4-11; Luke 3:1-6.*

The first reading comes from the prophet Malachi's announcement of the Lord's covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means "my messenger") shall prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God's people, as silver and gold are refined. Indeed, just like the Israelites, in Advent we are invited into a time of purification and refinement.

In Luke's Gospel, John the Baptizer's call to "prepare the way of the Lord" echoes Isaiah words

"that every lofty mountain be made low / and that age-old depths and gorges / be filled to level ground." The text encourages us to meditate on the universality of salvation. How can you take on John the Baptizer's challenge to repent for forgiveness with joy? Our reason to rejoice is evident, for as the psalmist sings, "The Lord has done great things for us."

Make an intentional effort this week to join in apostle Paul's prayer: may our love increase ever more and more in every way so that we can be ready for the day of Jesus Christ.



Illustration: the Advent O Antiphons (O Come, O Come Emmanuel)

# This Week at Home

## Monday, December 9

### Gabriel announces God's plan

Luke's gospel relates that Mary is "greatly troubled" at the angel Gabriel's greeting. The angel attempts to comfort her, telling her not to be afraid and reminding her that "nothing will be impossible for God." Celebrate Mary's courageous response to God's call by spending time in silence, listening to how God may be calling you. Reach out to a conversation partner and share your prayer experience. *Today's readings: Genesis 3:9–20; Psalm 98:1–4; Ephesians 1:3–6, 11–12; Luke 1:26–38.*

## Tuesday, December 10

### Comfort

Speaking to the Judeans exiled in Babylon, Isaiah tells of the deliverance that is to come. He assures them that flesh might wither and wilt as grass and flowers do, "but the word of our God stands forever." In the gospel, we hear that the Lord values each one of us, and just as a shepherd seeks after lost sheep, God does not want one of those who follow to be lost. *Today's readings: Isaiah 40:1–11; Psalm 96:1–3 and 10–13; Matthew 18:12–14.*

## Wednesday, December 11

### Mercy and grace

As you light two candles on your Advent wreath, say a prayer in gratitude for the Lord's mercy and graciousness. As the psalm proclaims, the Lord is "slow to anger, abounding in mercy" despite our turning from God. The Lord is always welcoming. As the gospel states, the Lord calls out, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened." *Today's readings: Isaiah 40:25–31; Psalm 103:1–4, 8, & 10; Matthew 11:28–30.*

## Thursday, December 12

### Our Lady/Mary of Guadalupe

Latino/Latina Christians invite us to wonder at Mary's appearance to Juan Diego, an indigenous peasant, on Tepeyac Hill, Mexico, in 1531. Mary, whose features were those of a Mesoamerican Indian, offered hope to the oppressed native peoples, who in turn, named her Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. The observance of Mary of Guadalupe is widely celebrated around the world. Look up the meaning of this traditional image of Mary in the Americas. On this anniversary day, pray with Mary's canticle (Luke 1:46–55) that you too might proclaim the greatness of the Lord, especially to the marginalized of this world. *Today's readings: Zechariah 2:14–17; Revelation 11:19; 12:1–6 & 10; Luke 1:26–47.*

## Friday, December 13

### Lucy/Lucia, martyr, died 304

Lucy (Santa Lucia), whose name means "light," was tortured and martyred for her dedication to her faith. Lucy is often depicted holding a platter with gouged eyeballs because she was blinded as part of her torture. Pray today that you may give sight to those who are hopeless and bring light in the darkness of persecution. *Today's readings: Isaiah 48:17–19; Psalm 1:1–6; Matthew 11:16–19.*

## Saturday, December 14

### John of the Cross, renewer of the church, died 1591

Spanish John of the Cross is an exemplar of religious contemplatives and mystics. After being educated by the Augustinians (Luther was an Augustinian) and Jesuits, he joined the Carmelites. John met Teresa of Avila and was attracted to her devotion to prayer and simplicity. After being influenced by her regimented spirituality, he was punished for seeking to restore the Carmelite order. To celebrate John of the Cross, pray today using a spiritual tradition/practice that may be unfamiliar to you. *Today's readings: Sirach (apocrypha) 48:1–4, 9–11; Psalm 80:23b, 15–19; Matthew 17:9–13.*