



CELEBRATING AT HOME
2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Prepare a way for the Lord (Matthew 3:1-12)



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Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Lord is here, present among us.

We are gathered with the whole Church in this moment of prayer.

Preparing to hear the Word

In this holy season of Advent
we prayerfully prepare to discover again
the great gift Christ is to us.

We are filled with hopeful longing,
with a sense of urgency.

God bids us:

**“Prepare a way for the Lord in the desert,”
so that all may know God’s healing presence,
for our God is full of tenderness and love,
like a shepherd towards his flock.**

Lighting of the second Advent candle

Lord Jesus Christ, you are already in our midst,
**yet we long for you to come more fully
and more deeply into our hearts.**

On you rested the spirit of the Lord:
**a spirit of wisdom and insight,
a spirit of counsel and power,
a spirit of knowledge, integrity and faithfulness.**

In your day the wolf will lie down with the lamb
and the panther with the kid.
Children shall play unharmed over the cobra’s lair.

May this candle remind us of your presence,
**which enlightens our minds,
and warms our hearts,
and shows us the way,
as we gather in the circle of its light.**

As the candle is lit, all say:
Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus!

Scripture Reading (*Matthew 3:1-12*)

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached
in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message:

‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.’

This was the man the prophet spoke of when he said:
A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.

This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair
with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was
locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea
and the whole Jordan district made their way to him,
and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan
they confessed their sins.

But when he saw a number of Pharisees and
Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them,
‘Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the
retribution that is coming? But if you are repentant,
produce the appropriate fruit, and do not presume
to tell yourselves, “We have Abraham for our father,”
because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham
from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the
roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to
produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the
fire.

I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who
follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit
to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy
Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand; he will
clear his threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the
barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never
go out.’

Reflection - *Prepare the way of the Lord*

The magnificent first reading from the prophet Isaiah
this weekend looks forward to the appearance of
one ‘on whom the spirit of the Lord rests – a spirit
of wisdom and insight, counsel and power and
knowledge of the fear of the Lord’.

He gives judgement in favour of the poor. His
judgement is not influenced by appearances or
hearsay. He judges with integrity. His word strikes the
ruthless and his sentences bring death to wickedness.
In his day extraordinary things happen: ‘the wolf lies
with the lamb...’ All creation is at peace. Even natural
enemies (symbolised by the animals) live together in
peace. No hurt or harm is done because the whole
country ‘is filled with the knowledge of the Lord’.

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John the Baptist sits at the centre of this week's Gospel and next week's. He is the 'one who cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord; make his paths straight'.

John was preparing the people for the coming of Jesus. Moved by his preaching many sought baptism in the river Jordan. This ancient water-rite symbolised dying to the old way of life and rising to a new way of life. That's what repentance is about: turning away from sin and turning towards God. It is about true conversion of heart. It's about making straight the pathways of our hearts. The fruit of our repentance and true conversion shows itself in good works.

Our preparation for the coming 'day of the Lord' is a continual cycle of dying and rising; of turning away from sin and towards God; of remaking our minds and hearts after the mind and heart of Christ. The good works we do give Christ presence, form and shape in the concrete reality of human life. So, Christian life is a constant act of preparation through repentance and good works.

Christmas is not just about the birth of Jesus long ago. It's also about giving birth to him in our lives every day.

Lord's Prayer

Formed by the teaching and example of Jesus, we pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Blessing

May the Lord bless us,
**keep us from all evil
and lead us to life everlasting.
Amen.**

The Season of Advent

The word "advent" means appearing, arrival, to come. Advent is the Church's time of preparation for celebrating God's gift of his Son. Our liturgy will gather the great Advent themes of hope, expectation and preparation. During Advent we recall Christ's coming at Bethlehem and we look forward to his second coming at the end of time. Advent is a season of joyful expectation.

The predominant colour during Advent is purple. Unlike Lent, Advent is not a penitential season. The purple colour represents hope, expectation and healing. It is one of the royal colours. We are preparing to welcome the King, the "sun of justice" who "will shine out with healing in its rays". (Mal 4:2 NRSV, 3:20 Jerusalem)

The custom of the Advent Wreath began in Germany in the 16th century. It symbolises the many years that the people of Israel waited in darkness for the coming of the expected Saviour. The light of the wreath grows steadily during our Advent prayer.

Advent has two parts. The first two Sundays focus on preparing for Jesus' return at the end of time. The second two Sundays focus on preparing to celebrate the anniversary of Jesus' birth.

The Gospels of the Sundays in Advent have four great movements: 1. Stay Awake! 2. Prepare! 3. Rejoice! and 4. Receive!

Advent is a journey from **Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!** to **Emmanuel. God-is-with-us!**

*Light and
Love in the
darkness*



This resource is presented by the Carmelites for use by individuals, families and small groups as a prayerful celebration of the Word of God to help prepare us to celebrate the Eucharist with our worshipping communities. We are conscious that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but also in the Scriptures and in our hearts. We are also conscious of the many people who, for various reasons including sickness and infirmity, cannot physically attend the Eucharist. Even when we are on our own we remain part of the Body of Christ.

In the room you decide to use for this prayer you could have a lighted candle, a crucifix and the Bible. These symbols help keep us mindful of the sacredness of our time of prayer and can help us feel connected with our local worshipping communities.

This text is arranged with parts for a leader and for all to pray, but the leader's parts can be shared among those present.

As you use this prayer know that the Carmelites will be remembering in our prayer all the members of our family.



The Carmelites
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