

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**O People of Zion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.**

## COLLECT

Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son, but may our learning of heavenly wisdom gain us admittance to his company. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

## FIRST READING 5:1-9

*A reading from the prophet Baruch*

Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress,  
put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever,  
wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you,  
put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal on your head:  
since God means to show your splendour to every nation under heaven,  
since the name God gives you for ever will be,  
'Peace through integrity, and honour through devotedness'.

Arise, Jerusalem, stand on the heights  
and turn your eyes to the east:  
see your sons reassembled from west and east  
at the command of the Holy One, jubilant that  
God has remembered them.  
Though they left you on foot,  
with enemies for an escort,  
now God brings them back to you  
like royal princes carried back in glory.  
For God has decreed the flattening  
of each high mountain, of the everlasting  
hills,  
the filling of the valleys to make the ground  
level  
so that Israel can walk in safety under the  
glory of God.  
And the forests and every fragrant tree will  
provide shade for Israel at the command of  
God;  
for God will guide Israel in joy by the light of  
his glory  
with his mercy and integrity for escort.  
**The word of the Lord.**

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 125

**Response: What marvels the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad.**

1. When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage,  
it seemed like a dream.  
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,  
on our lips there were songs. (R.)
2. The heathens themselves said: 'What marvels the Lord worked for them!' What marvels the Lord worked for us!  
Indeed we were glad. (R.)
3. Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage  
as streams in dry land.  
Those who are sowing in tears

will sing when they reap. (R)

4. They go out, they go out, full of tears  
carrying seed for the sowing:  
they come back, they come back, full of  
song,  
carrying their sheaves. (R)

## SECOND READING 1:3-6.8-11

*A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians*

Every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy, remembering how you have helped to spread the Good News from the day you first heard it right up to the present. I am quite certain that the One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes. God knows how much I miss you all, loving you as Christ Jesus loves you. My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognise what is best. This will help you to become pure and blameless, and prepare you for the Day of Christ, when you will reach the perfect goodness which Jesus Christ produces in us for the glory and praise of God.

**The word of the Lord.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Prepare a way for the Lord,  
make his paths straight,  
and all mankind shall see the salvation of God.**

**Alleluia!**

## GOSPEL 3:1-6

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke*

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Iturea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,  
make his paths straight.  
Every valley will be filled in,  
every mountain and hill be laid low, winding  
ways will be straightened  
and rough roads made smooth.  
And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

**The Gospel of the Lord.**

## PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased, O Lord, with our humble prayers and offerings, and, since we have no merits to plead our cause, come, we pray, to our rescue with the protection of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord.

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, through our partaking in this mystery, you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and hold firm to the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord.**

## GOSPEL REFLECTION

Why do you think Luke sets historical



parameters for this gospel reading? Does the historical setting provide the authenticity needed to help define the time of Jesus' birth?

What or who was the word of God that came to John in the desert?

What promise did God make to his people? Is the word of God the fulfilment of that promise?

Does it seem appropriate that John would be announcing the coming of the Messiah as promised? Are you to announce the presence of Jesus to the world, as well?

Why did Jesus submit to John's baptism of repentance if he is God and without sin of any kind? Do you see the act of Jesus submitting himself to John's baptism as a sign of his humanity? Why?

*Why were you (will you be) baptised and to what does this baptism call you? Is baptism a lifelong commitment? To whom are you committed?*

How does your baptism compare to John's baptism of repentance? Is baptism still a penitential experience? How does baptism call you to forgive others? To be forgiven yourself?

How can you prepare the way of the Lord?

Does today's reading promise salvation to all humankind? What relevance does this reading have for Advent?

## GOSPEL ACTION

Plan to ask forgiveness of someone who you may have wronged. Prepare the way of the Lord for your family and friends this week.

## Readings – 3<sup>rd</sup> Week Advent Year C

**First Reading:** Zephaniah 3:14-18  
**Second Reading:** Philippians 4:4-7  
**Gospel:** Luke 3:10-18

## Homily Second Sunday of Advent Year C

Storm Arwen certainly made an impact last weekend. Wasn't the weather dreadful! The Gospel of the first Sunday in Advent reminded us to 'Stay Awake' and with the wind and driving rain, many were lying awake praying that the roof would stay on! Sadly, thousands of homes in Britain are still without electricity as engineers work hard to remove fallen trees and replace broken cables.

Closer to home and on the opposite corner of the Wirral to Wallasey in the village of Puddington, we too were without power for 3 days. What an experience! On the Friday evening with some candles lit and burning some logs in one room for heat it all seemed quite cosy with the expectation all would be fixed by the morning. Come Saturday evening, lighting candles at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, boiling water in a camping kettle and cooking on a camping stove was beginning to wear a little thin. Even in the mornings, it was so dark, candles were needed until about 8 o'clock. The hot water storage tank gave up its last lukewarm water on the Sunday morning and I was here warming myself on the radiators in the sacristy.

No internet, no phone calls, no cooker, no boiler...all these things we take for granted in our daily lives were no longer there without electricity. And in the long evenings, in the candle-light, with the house getting colder and colder, by Sunday night it was time to double the quilts and fill some hot-water bottles.

But out of adversity, often some good will come and for me in those quiet, long, dark evenings my thoughts turned to all those generations who have gone before us, for all those who lived in an era before electricity, a time before the well-stocked supermarkets at the end of the street.

I wonder how the newly-weds Joseph and his pregnant wife Mary managed the long winter nights? For, the people who lived in biblical times, right through probably to the c19th daily life followed the times and the seasons far more closely than we do now. A lot of effort would have gone into 'preparing' for the long, dark winter. Making sure there were plenty of dry, chopped logs for fires, oil and candles for light, jams, pickles, cereals and preserved meats to eat. Making preparation would have been in the everyday consciousness of ordinary people and at the forefront of their minds. Perhaps in our modern times we have lost some of that habit and familiarity with preparation.

In this season of Advent, the emphasis in scripture is on exactly that, 'Preparation'. Preparing to welcome the Son of God, the Christ Child into the world at Christmas. In our first reading, the prophet Baruch is writing from within the captive Israelite nation who have been taken into exile in Babylon. This takes place almost 600 years before Christ was born and Baruch is writing of the hunger, the emotion of the people and their hope that God will lead them once again to the promised land, lead them back to their home in Jerusalem. Baruch writes of his vision of God making the mountains low and filling in the valleys to create a smooth road with the shade of trees for the people to walk along as they return home. The Psalm repeats the message, prepare to return home delivered from slavery, when tearful eyes will be wiped dry and mouths will be filled with laughter and songs once more. In the Gospel, Luke is preparing us for Jesus to enter and begin his ministry and John the Baptist uses the same descriptive language as Baruch and Isaiah, 'Every valley will be filled in and every mountain and hill laid low', calling each one of us to 'Prepare a way for the Lord'!

What mountains in our lives need laying low, what valleys do we fall into that need filling in so we can make a smooth and straight road for Christ to enter our lives at Christmas? I don't suggest for a moment turning the power off at the meter cupboard to give yourselves a quiet, dark space to consider these questions, but perhaps in your own way, it is worth making that time and space for quietly listening to the Spirit and in your own lives 'Prepare a way for the Lord!'

## **Bidding Prayers and Synod Prayer**

**28<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, Year C**

### **Priest:**

As we prepare a way for the Lord this Advent we bring all our prayers before him now.

### **Reader:**

For the Church and Christians everywhere: may they be attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as they journey together this Advent.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all our young people: we pray especially for Aidan who will receive his First Holy Communion this weekend. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For ourselves: may we take seriously our important roles as good stewards of Creation. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are poor or in need: following the example of Christ may we always help and serve them particularly in this time of Advent with love, generosity and compassion. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For migrants and refugees everywhere, particularly our refugees here in Wallasey; may we do all we can to help and support them. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those in our parish who are sick or housebound: may they come to know the love and the comforting presence of Christ the King and healer. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For the faithful departed especially **Victoria Coverdale, Jeffrey Wallace** and all who have died recently and those whose anniversaries occur around this time: **“Eternal rest grant unto them...”**

We pray through the intercession of Mary our mother: **“Hail Mary...”**

In silence we bring our own private prayers and intentions before the Lord.

**Priest:** Loving Father,

As we prepare a way for the Lord this Advent  
we offer these and all our prayers to you,  
through your Son Jesus,  
who is Christ Our Lord, Amen.

## **Bidding Prayers and Synod Prayer**

**28<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, Year C**

### **Synod Prayer**

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,  
as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,  
make Yourself at home in our hearts;  
Teach us the way we must go  
and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful;  
do not let us promote disorder.  
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path  
nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity  
so that we may journey together to eternal life  
and not stray from the way of truth  
and what is right.

All this we ask of You,  
who are at work in every place and time,  
in the communion of the Father and the Son,  
forever and ever. **Amen**