

## in your heart

### Prayer Centre

Retain the coloured cloth, replenish the greenery for the Advent wreath and have the scriptures open to the Gospel reading. Light the first candle. Use small rocks to form a path that finishes at the base of the candle. Read the reflection as the second candle is lit.

### Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord.

Isaiah 40: 5

God will lead us to wisdom and understanding. We each follow a different path, but no matter where we go we take a little of each person we meet with us.

### First Reading

Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-11

"Comfort my people," says our God. "Comfort them! Encourage the people of Jerusalem. Tell them they have suffered long enough and their sins are now forgiven. I have punished them in full for all their sins." A voice cries out, "Prepare in the wilderness a road for the Lord! Clear the way in the desert for our God! Fill every valley; level every mountain. The hills will become a plain, and the rough country will be made smooth.

Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it. The Lord himself has promised this. "Jerusalem, go up on a high mountain and proclaim the good news! Call out with a loud voice, Zion; announce the good news! Speak out and do not be afraid. Tell the towns of Judah that their God is coming! The Sovereign Lord is coming to rule with power, bringing with him the people he has rescued. He will take care of his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs together and carry them in his arms; he will gently lead their mothers".

### Did You Know?

Before Isaiah, the prophet Jeremiah had warned the people that their behaviour towards God would bring his wrath on them. God allowed the King, the temple and their way of life to be swept away and the people to be taken into slavery in Babylon.

In chapter 40, Isaiah tells the people that they can return and be comforted by God who forgives and accepts them.

He uses the images that the people would be familiar with. The old concept was of God as a warrior who rides in from the desert supported by his armies and delivers his people. Whereas the path is the highway made straight for God to return to his people on, a processional way for a king.

The last part of the reading is a hymn of praise to God for saving them.

### Reflection

*What are the valleys in my life that need to be filled up so that I can prepare for the Lord's coming at Christmas?*

*What are the mountains in my life that need to be torn down so that I can prepare for the Lord's coming at Christmas?*

### Psalm

Psalm 84: 9-14

Response: **Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

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.**

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

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.**

### Did You Know?

Peace comes to those who return to God with humble prayer and are forgiven completely. The forgiven sinner is one who bears fruit in his/her life.

## Reflection

*In what ways have I experienced the Lord's kindness this week?*

*In what ways can I show the Lord's kindness to others?*

## Second Reading

2 Peter 3: 8-14

But do not forget one thing, my dear friends! There is no difference in the Lord's sight between one day and a thousand years; to him the two are the same. The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead, he is patient with you, because he does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins. But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that Day the heavens will disappear with a shrill noise, the heavenly bodies will burn up and be destroyed, and the earth with everything in it will vanish. Since all these things will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people should you be?

Your lives should be holy and dedicated to God, as you wait for the Day of God and do your best to make it come soon - the Day when the heavens will burn up and be destroyed, and the heavenly bodies will be melted by the heat. But we wait for what God has promised: new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness will be at home. And so, my friends, as you wait for that Day, do your best to be pure and faultless in God's sight and to be at peace with him.

## Did You Know?

The Letter of St Peter is said to have been written by the Apostle Peter. The letter is addressed to the suffering churches in Asia Minor who would have been officially and socially persecuted. Officially the Christians would have been taken to court and even executed. Socially they were outcasts.

One of the things that the Christians of the day believed was that the Lord would return in their lifetimes. That is why the reading speaks of the end times coming.

## Reflection

*How can I use the time wisely given to me this Advent to prepare for Christ's coming at Christmas?*

## Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

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

Alleluia!

## Gospel

Mark 1: 1-8

This is the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It began as the prophet Isaiah had written: "God said, 'I will send my messenger ahead of you to open the way for you.' Someone is shouting in the desert, 'Get the road ready for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel!' " So John appeared in the desert, baptizing and preaching.

"Turn away from your sins and be baptized," he told the people, "and God will forgive your sins."



Many people from the province of Judea and the city of Jerusalem went out to hear John. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River. John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. He announced to the people, "The man who will come after me is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to bend down and untie his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

## Did You Know?

Mark is the only one of the evangelists that speaks of the Gospel (Good News). He commences his Gospel by proclaiming that Jesus is that Good News. Mark takes us back to Isaiah in preparing the reader for John the Baptist and then quickly takes us to how John is the one preparing the people for Jesus.

John the Baptist immediately steps aside for Jesus who will baptise with the Holy Spirit.

## Reflection

*How can I be God's faithful messenger this week to help people prepare for the coming of Christ?*

## Action for the Week

During the week think about an action you can do so as to best assist others to use their talents for the community.