

Gospel Reflection

The rapturous lines we hear at the very beginning of the Liturgy of the Word today are some of the most familiar of this season. They were written by an author whom scripture scholars call "Second Isaiah," since this one writes with a different style, vocabulary, and content from the author of the first thirty-nine chapters of this book of the Bible. The beautiful words of trust, confidence, and faith were written when Israel was in one of its most profound periods of sadness and turmoil: exile from their land, their Temple, and (some would have believed) their God. Scholars also tell us that this passage was most likely a song or canticle sung by the exiled Israelites during prayer or worship. Like today's psalm, it calls us to look forward in confidence to that day when "kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss" (Psalm 85:11).

Few of us know what it is like to be in exile. Perhaps we have, at one time or another, been homesick or estranged from family. But we do many things in life that exile us, put us at a great distance from God. John the Baptist, herald of Christ, today is shown calling people to end that exile by his baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. It is this repentance, Peter tells us in his letter, that we ought to be about as we await the return of the Lord. Even though Advent is not focused on repentance in the same way or to the same degree that Lent is, our repentance is definitely one component of our own making straight a path for the coming of the Lord. We remember Jesus' words from last week's parable to be watchful; for the master does not necessarily end our exile, our distancing, by returning us to him, but by returning to us, and expecting us to be prepared and ready when our days of separation are at an end.

KEEPING FAITH FIRST FAMILY FUN

Mark 1:1-8

L O C U S T S B S X P P R
P E H C Y E M B H S F T W
F F A E X R S E D E E J L
M S I T P A B E L H Y O Y
F N A A H P S J P A T H S
Y C S H O E O O W G V N U
H K I O R R R E O S N L S
Z P P T D P L B Z D O P Z
E C N A T N E P E R L C I
J O N Y E N O H D L I W W
M H O L Y S P I R I T N I
D H Q S G P Z J J D Y V I
J E N G A I E C F Q S O A

Find these words from the Gospel passage.

BAPTISM	DESERT	JORDAN
ISAIAH	JOHN	HOLY SPIRIT
LORD	LOCUSTS	PROPHET
PATHS	PREPARE	LEATHER BELT
WAY	REPENTANCE	WILD HONEY

Disciple's Reflection & Questions of the Week

*The Second Sunday of Advent
12/7/2008*

*Mark 1:1-8
Faith-Sharing
Questions of the Week*



Our Lady of the Assumption

435 Berkeley Ave.
Claremont, CA
www.olaclaremont.org

Call to Prayer

We begin by calling upon God:

**In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the
Holy Spirit, Amen.**

*We then pause for a moment to listen with
our hearts to this week's Gospel passage...*

The Word of God: *Mark 1:1-8*

The Gospel according to Mark

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

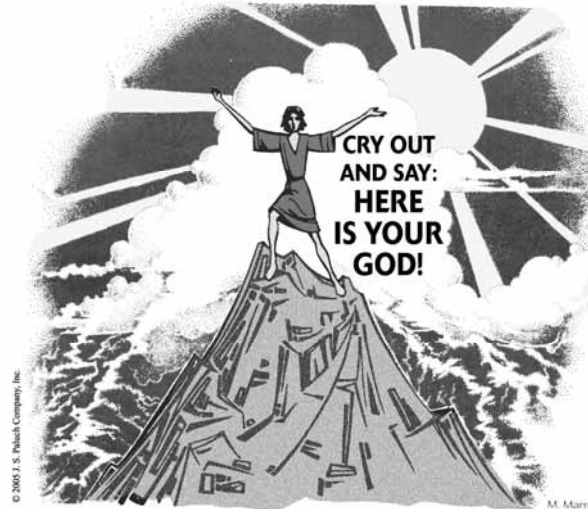
As it is written in **Isaiah the prophet:** *Behold, I am sending a messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."*

John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

John was **clothed** in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on **locusts and wild honey**. And this is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am

not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Gospel of the Lord



Gospel Glossary

Isaiah the prophet: Although Mark attributes the text to *Isaiah*, the quote here is actually a combination of verses taken from the books of *Malachi*, *Isaiah* and *Exodus*.

clothed: John's clothing is like that of the prophet Elijah, as described in *2 Kings* 1:8. John the Baptist is directly compared to Elijah elsewhere in the gospels.

locusts and wild honey: food readily available in the desert. It is significant that both of these foods conform to Jewish dietary law, showing that John was righteous in spite of the lack of the usual ritually prepared foods.

Faith Sharing

Questions of the Week

- What do I need to "make straight" in my life in order to "prepare the way of the Lord?"
- How am I personally helping to "prepare the way of the Lord" this Advent?
- What is an example of the on-going promise of the gospel in my life?

Closing Prayer

God of power and mercy,

Open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy, so that we may share his wisdom and become one with him when he comes in glory. For he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Second Sunday of Advent