

Readings for the 2nd Sunday in Advent, December 10, 2017

FIRST READING

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah 40:1-11

“Comfort, O comfort my people! Give them peace,” says God.
“Speak tenderly to my people and proclaim to them
that their service is at an end, that iniquity has been removed.”
For from God’s hand, they have known
a double measure for all their wrongdoings.

A voice cries out:

“Prepare a way in the desert for the Holy One,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Let every valley be raised up, and every mountain and hill be made low.
The rugged land shall be made a plain,
the steep places become level.
Then the brilliance of God shall be revealed,
and all humanity shall see it together,
for the mouth of God has spoken.”

A voice said, “Cry out!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?
For all humanity is grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers and the flower fades
when the breath of God blows upon them.”

“Even so,” the voice persists, “although the grass withers,
and the flower fades,
the Word on God’s breath will stand forever.
And so climb to a mountaintop, you that bring good news.
Cry at the top of your voice, O, herald of good tidings.
Shout out fearlessly, saying to all the towns,
Here is your God!”

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Here is the Holy One, your God, who comes in the power of love,
 coming to lead with and embrace us in the strong arm of love.
For God will feed the whole flock like a shepherd,
 and keep them together by holding them in God's arms.
Against God's bosom the lambs will be carried,
 and God will lead the mother sheep to water.

The Word of Second Isaiah.
Thanks be to God.

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PSALM

Psalm 122 (Nan Merrill, stanza 1 edited and stanza 3), Luke 1:76-80

The psalm response is¹:

A voice cries out in the wilderness: Prepare a way for our God.

A voice cries out in the wilderness: Make straight a highway for God!

R: A voice cries out in the wilderness: Prepare a way for our God.

A voice cries out in the wilderness: Make straight a highway for God!

My spirit soared when a voice spoke to me:

"Let us go to the House of God."

Our feet are standing at the gates

of the path that leads to the Heart,
the path that leads to peace.

R: A voice cries out in the wilderness: Prepare a way for our God.

A voice cries out in the wilderness: Make straight a highway for God!

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Holy;

for you will lead us, preparing the path.

You will give all people knowledge of their holiness

through forgiveness, by making what is wounded whole.

For the tenderness of God turns the earth towards a healing sun,

illuminating spirits wherever death's shadow appears,
a light to guide our feet into the path of peace.

R: A voice cries out in the wilderness: Prepare a way for our God.

A voice cries out in the wilderness: Make straight a highway for God!

Pray for the peace of the world!

Pray all nations prosper as one!

Pray peace reign among all peoples,

and integrity dwell in every heart!

¹ We recommend a sung response. This response is the refrain from "A Voice Cries Out" by Michael Joncas

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Then will friends and neighbors and former enemies
cry out in gratitude, "Peace is ours, we live in peace!"

***R: A voice cries out in the wilderness: Prepare a way for our God.
A voice cries out in the wilderness: Make straight a highway for God!***

For the good of all Creation,
we enter the House of God.

In my glad heart I say,
"Peace is ours, we live in peace."

***R: A voice cries out in the wilderness: Prepare a way for our God.
A voice cries out in the wilderness: Make straight a highway for God!***

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SECOND READING

A Reading from Paul's 1st and 2nd Letters to the Corinthians

1 Cor 1:3-9; 2 Cor 13:11-13

Grace to you and peace from God our Creator and Jesus the Christ.

I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus. Through God, you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you. As a result, you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of Jesus the Christ. God will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of Jesus the Christ. God is faithful, and by God you were called to community with Jesus the Christ.

Finally, beloved, we wish you joy. Mend your ways. Encourage one another. Have a common spirit, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All God's people send you greetings. The grace of Jesus the Christ, the love of God, and the Holy Spirit be with you all.

The Word of the Apostle Paul.

Thanks be to God.

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GOSPEL

Our God is with you...

A Reading from the Gospels attributed to Mark and to John

Mk 1:1-8; Jn 1:19-23

Glory to you, O God.

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus the Christ, born of God.
As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

*“Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
Who will prepare your way.
A voice of one crying out in the desert,
Prepare the way of our God.
Make straight the highway.”*

John the Baptist was in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People from the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem flocked to him. As they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, they confessed their sins. John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. When he preached, he proclaimed, “One more powerful than I is coming after me. I am unworthy to stoop and untie the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water, but the one to come will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

...

And this is the testimony of John, when the Judeans sent religious authorities from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”

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And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of our God,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”

The Gospel of Our God.

Praise to you, Jesus the Christ.