

## Cycle A – Second Sunday of Advent, December 4, 2022

“Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near”

3 readings

### OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 72)

Leader: In the Lord’s days may righteousness flourish  
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

All: May he have dominion from sea to sea,  
and from the river to the ends of the earth.

Leader: For God delivers the needy when they call,  
the poor and those who have no helper.

All: God has pity on the weak and the needy,  
and saves the lives of the needy.  
Amen



### First Reading – Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah’s words announce the coming of a saving leader (referring to David as the offspring of Jesse), and describes for us what a world of peace, a culture of peace, would look like. The evocative poetry paints an ideal picture, inviting us to contemplate God’s hopes and desires for our lives and for all of creation. Conflicts are gone, opposites are fused into one, and divisions have disappeared. Children and small animals dwell in peace with wild beasts and snakes. All creation lives in harmony.

1. Why is it important to keep this ideal vision alive?
2. How do we bridge the huge gap between our violent world reality and this vision?
3. Where is this promised kingdom? Do we see it here and now, or is it yet to be?

### Second Reading – Romans 15:4-9

Paul has good advice: without ignoring the harsh realities of life (and the discouragement which often comes with those realities), he urges us to lift our eyes upward and look to the Scriptures for guidance and wisdom. The Holy Scriptures are meant to be read not as a dead letter but as a living testament because they give us encouragement to endure and have hope. Paul speaks of steadfastness and encouragement to describe both God and the holy writings. Jesus is the visible fulfillment of God’s faithful love. He came as a servant of the Jewish people through the line of David. Jesus Christ forms the bridge of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles. This awareness, Paul summons, is to lead directly into loving one another in the spirit of Christ himself.

1. What role does the Holy Scripture play in our times of distress?
2. How does God make his steadfastness known to us in our day-to-day life?
3. What is the responsibility of lectors (readers of Scripture) at the Eucharist?

### **Gospel – Matthew 3:1-12**

The Advent season easily has us focus on the coming of the *infant* Messiah. However, John the Baptist's words clearly refer to the coming of an *adult* Messiah. Everything about John the Baptist challenges established religious authorities. He emerged from the desert, he wore tattered clothing and ate locusts and wild honey. John calls people not only to repentance, but to an integrity that bears the fruit of love and mercy.

1. How would we respond to a John the Baptist today? Who among us really wants to make changes in her/his life?
2. In what ways does our behaviour show that we repent and believe God's Good News?
3. Much in life is urgent, but not essential. Do John's words feel urgent or essential?

### **LIVING THE WORD**

What is God's challenge for me/us this coming week?

### **PRAYING THE WORD**

**Intercession:** For those who are missioned to issue God's call for repentance in our churches, our communities and our world, at the risks of not being heard, of being ridiculed, or of being persecuted.

We pray to the Lord.

*Invite other intentions, end with "Our Father ...")*

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Leader: Let us pray: O Christ, Word made Flesh  
You entered into our humanness, becoming one of us.

All: You reveal to us the meaning of life itself.  
You have come to teach us to hope and renew us in hope.

Leader: May our lives, illumined by the radiance of your life,  
become a gift to others as we continue to work for peace. Amen.

Let us share with one another a sign of peace: a peace the world cannot give.