

2nd Sunday of Advent



The key to all success is to be found in the preparations we make. Today we are invited to prepare a way for the Lord.

Baruch 5:1-9

The prophet Baruch echoes the message of Isaiah that God will enable us to walk safely on level ground.

Philippians 1:4-6. 8-11

Paul wants us to prepare for the Day of Christ. His prayer for us is that we will always recognise what is best.

Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist is the one who fulfils the prophecy about preparing a way for the Lord and shows us what needs to be done.



"All flesh shall see the salvation of God".

On the Second and Third Sundays of Advent we hear the proclamation of John the Baptist. He is one of the key figures in Advent because his urgent message sums up what the season is all about:

- **a time to prepare our hearts and minds**

- **to accept the gospel that Jesus offers**
- **and to carry it out in our daily lives.**

Luke situated the beginning of Jesus' ministry within the political and religious history of Palestine. He noted that it was

- the fifteenth year of the reign of the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar (27-29 AD), the second of the Roman emperors, and the successor of Augustus.
- Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea,
- Herod Antipas ruled Galilee and Perea, and
- Caiaphas served as high priest.

It was at this time that God called John the Baptist to announce the coming of God's anointed one.

God did not call John to be a prophet in a temple or in a palace, but in the desert. John preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins in preparation for the imminent reign of God. Luke quoted the prophet Isaiah to show the fulfilment of God's promises in the scriptures: a voice of one crying out in the desert: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths'



"All mankind shall see the salvation of God."

The coming "Day of Christ"! We meet John the Baptist. Just as he once "prepared the way" for the coming of Christ, so now he does the same for us.

Our hearts should be open to his voice, as he calls us to repentance, and asks us to make the way straight for the coming of our Lord.


The dominant image today is of a vast population moving together –

- the return from exile in the first reading,
- the going and coming of the sowers in the psalm,
- the community of the Church preparing together in Paul’s letter.
- As His people, we prepare for the coming of the Lord.

As a Parish community we cooperate to make the “processional way” of the Holy One - flattening the hills of opposition and ridicule, filling in the valleys of doubt and despair, so that “all mankind shall see the salvation of God.”

GOSPEL WORDSEARCH

E	D	U	J	O	N	H	E	A	E	TIBERIUS
I	O	A	S	N	P	R	E	E	S	PILATE
P	R	S	U	H	J	D	N	L	S	JUDEA
L	E	Y	I	O	U	E	Y	A	A	HEROD
I	H	L	R	J	L	S	N	E	E	PHILIP
H	I	A	E	I	A	N	S	T	A	ITURAEA
P	I	L	B	N	A	N	A	L	R	LYSANIAS
I	S	A	I	A	H	L	N	I	U	ABILENE
E	T	A	T	R	I	U	N	P	T	ANNAS
M	S	A	H	P	A	I	A	C	I	CAIAPHAS
										JOHN
										ISAIAH



From a Scottish poet, John Bell:

Light looked down and saw the darkness.

“I will go there,” said light.

Peace looked down and saw War.

“I will go there,” said peace.

Love looked down and saw hatred.

“I will go there,” said love.

So he,
 the Lord of Light,
 the Prince of Peace,
 the King of Love,
 came down and crept in beside us.

St Francis, Stratford:

What's all this about a "synod" and the "Synodal Process"

The title of the 2023 Synod of Bishops is "For a Synodal Church:

- **Communion,**
- **Participation,**
- **Mission."**

The process which encompasses the stated aim of Pope Francis that the Church in today's world should have a vision of a

- **missionary communion orientated to evangelisation.**

The process begins in the Local Church and then moves to the level of the Bishops' Conference. From there, discernment takes place in the Regional Area – for England and Wales, it would be steered by the European Council of Bishops' Conferences – before moving on to the Universal Church with the final Synod Gathering of Bishops in 2023, **sub et cum Petro.**

This process reflects the teaching of the Second Vatican Council in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, **Lumen Gentium.** In this Council Document, the universality of the People of God is affirmed (LG§12) and by their anointing in the Holy Spirit, the universal body is "incapable of being at fault in belief."

The sacrament of Baptism offers entry into the life of faith and love.

QUESTIONS

1. What does "Synodality" mean?

Synodality comes from a Greek word meaning the "walking together" (syn-) on a "particular way" (-hodos)

2. If the process is already defined, how do we “walk together?”

Every member of the Church has got the right to speak, and the obligation to allow those charged with the work of discernment the freedom to do so. Pope Francis in his book *Let us Dream* says **“we need a respectful, mutual listening, free of ideology and predetermined agendas”**

This is at the heart of the process. Each diocese will form its own means of running this listening process so that it reaches as broad a scope of people as possible.

3. Is this just for parishes and dioceses?

No, it involves everyone. Schools, young people, hospital chaplaincies, university chaplaincies, prison chaplaincies, the religious and consecrated communities, the societies of apostolic life, those with a distinctive charism in the church all have a voice that speaks into the conversation. Catholic organisations and charities also have a role to play in this work. Echoing the experience of the Second Vatican Council, Ecumenical and Interreligious engagement is also encouraged, and this is best facilitated at the local level. This is an important voice from outside the Church that offers an insight into the collaboration for the good of everyone.

4. Can we talk about any topic?

Pope Francis says “what is under discussion at synodal gatherings are **not** the traditional truths of Christian doctrine. The Synod is concerned mainly **with how teaching can be lived and applied in the changing contexts of our time.**”

Therefore any topics can be raised.

The whole Synodal Process is a prayerful process, rooted in the encounter with Jesus in the prayerful reading of the Sacred Scriptures and through the liturgical

life of the Church and inspired by an openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit. Listening to each other is very important. Pope Francis says “we listen, we discuss in groups but above all we pay attention to what the Spirit has to say to us.”

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