

**FOR THE WEEKEND OF Dec. 6-7, 2025**  
Second Sunday in Advent

**Gospel Reading**  
Matthew 3: 1-12

John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said:  
*A voice of one crying out in the desert,  
Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight his paths.*  
John wore clothing made of camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. At that time Jerusalem, all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.

When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruit as evidence of your repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

### **Intercession**

May we follow John's call to "Prepare the way of the Lord" through service to others and support of mission-building initiatives like the Catholic Ministry Appeal.

### **Bulletin Announcement**

John the Baptist doesn't mince words in today's Gospel. He calls on those listening to him — and us, today — to "Prepare the way of the Lord" and "make straight his path." And he tells us how — by repenting.

Repenting can be challenging. It's more than just feeling sorry for our shortcomings. To repent, we go beyond remorse. We change our hearts and minds. We act. And we must act now, "for the kingdom of God is at hand." If we are to enjoy this new life that the coming of the Lord promises, we need to give up the ways that aren't working for us, that keep us from a full and loving relationship with God.

What do we need to purge? Our reliance on our abilities, not God? Placing more importance on the things of this world rather than the next? A tendency to see the shortcomings in others instead of their strengths? Perennial busyness that prevents us from resting in the Lord?

During this Advent season, may we prepare for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ, by spending some time examining our thoughts and actions and trying to rid ourselves of those that direct us away from God and strengthening those that lead us to Him. Let us anticipate with hope Christ's birth through prayer and help extend this hope to others through a gift to the Catholic Ministry Appeal.

### **Pulpit Announcement**

John's ministry was a successful one. Throngs of people, "all Judea, and the whole region around the Jordan," sought him out to hear him preach and "were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins," turning anew to God. Many thought he was the long-awaited Messiah the prophets proclaimed. But John is quick to correct them, declaring that "the one who is coming after me is mightier than I." He informs that the actual Messiah will baptize in the Holy Spirit and fire for conversion, not just water for repentance.

In all the talk of sin and repentance in today's Gospel, hope reigns supreme. No, it isn't easy to be reminded of all the times we fall short of being the people God created us to be. We are human, and thus we are imperfect sinners in need of God's mercy.

But all is not lost. Far from it. If it is mercy that we need, God provides it, abundantly! He sends His own Son and the Spirit to bring us to new life. We don't have to go it alone, and that is a huge relief. All we have to do is choose. Do we recognize God's presence and love



in Jesus and follow Him? Or do we turn a blind eye and walk away? Do we accept God's offer of purification and let His complete love into our hearts? Or do we cling to our sinfulness?

May we choose to accept God's profound love for us this Advent. And then, ignited with this love, may we share it with all we meet, including supporting the Catholic Ministry Appeal.

**Social Media Post/Content**

Photo: A peaceful wooded path that stretches to the distance

Header: "Make straight his path" – Matthew 3:3

Copy: In a season of giving, we are reminded that the greatest gift of all — God's unwavering love for us — is made present in His Son. Let's "prepare the way of the Lord" through prayer and service.

When you support our parish through the Catholic Ministry Appeal, you are sharing God's abundant love with those in need and preparing for the coming of Love personified.