

2nd Sunday

The kingdom of heaven is at hand

Mt 3:1-12

The 4 stars of Advent

The star of preparation

1st Sunday

Be prepared because
the son of man is coming.
(Mt 24,37-44)

The star of choice

2nd Sunday

The kingdom of heaven
is at hand.
(Mt 3,1-12)

The star of perplexity

3rd Sunday

Are you the one
who is to come?
(Mt 11,2-11)

The star of mystery

4th Sunday

They shall name him
Emmanuel.
(Mt 1,18-25)

Advent features radiant “presences” that, like beacons in the night, illuminate the path leading to the One who comes. On the Second Sunday of Advent, we meet John the Baptizer, a witness to the Light. He is a decisive, convinced and profound “mouthpiece of God”—the herald of a prophetic message that speaks to hearts, urging them to prepare for a great event, namely, that heaven has drawn near to earth and the doors to the kingdom of love have been thrown wide. God has chosen to reveal to humanity the beauty of his face by sending his only Son as King. John invites us to look beyond the emperor of the moment and welcome the mysterious logic of a poor, gentle, humble and merciful King who comes to serve everyone. “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand!” (Mt. 3:2) This is the most pressing invitation of the Gospel. We are called to take a stand either for or against Jesus. Advent is a favorable time for reflecting on our daily choices to see whether or not they are in harmony with the kingdom of heaven. It is impossible to live according to the Gospel if we rely on human strength alone so the Precursor of the Lord leads us into the desert, the place of rebirth. The austerity of the desert purifies us and hones our ability to listen. And enhanced listening makes us receptive to God and to the innovations of the Spirit. But we might understandably ask: why the desert? Because it is the desert experience that teaches us how to converse with God, how to let go of our self-sufficiency, how to pray. In prayer, God draws close to us and lovingly shows us our regal identity. John proclaims the greatest truth in history, namely: it is not human beings who draw close to God; instead, it is God who, in Jesus, eternally draws close to human beings.



Prayer

*Lord Jesus,
give us the courage and radicality
of John the Baptizer so that,
purified by the silence of the desert,
we will be able to listen to the only Word
that can make us prophets of the Kingdom
along the highways of the world.
Amen.*