

Imbued with the Word we trace out **PATHS** of hope



1st Sunday

Stay alert!

Is. 63:16b-17.19b; 64:2-7; Ps 79;
1Co. 1:3-9; Mk. 13:33-37

2nd Sunday

**Make straight the way
of the Lord!**

Is. 40:1-5, 9-11; Ps. 84; 2 Pt. 3:8-
14; Mk. 1:1-8



3rd Sunday

Rejoice!

Is. 61:1-2, 10-11; Lk. 1:46-
54; 1 Th. 5:16-24; Jn. 1:6-8, 19-28

4th Sunday

Here I am!

2 Sm. 7,1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps. 88;
Rm. 16:25-27; Lk. 1:26-38

A metaphor used by many cultures in speaking about life is that of a path. The Church takes from the lips of the prophets and John the Baptist the invitation to straighten and level our paths because the Lord is near. To prepare a path for the Lord means to give visibility to the prophetic vocation, namely: to act as a "forerunner." But it is not enough to fulfill the role of prophet and *prepare the way*, it is also necessary to travel *the sole path* leading to the Father: Jesus Way, Truth and Life. To journey in Christ means to take on, to an ever-greater degree, his fully human and divine features, to make our own Paul's itinerary of conformity to the Son to the point that "it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me" (Ga. 2:20).

The Third Week of Advent opens with a powerful invitation to rejoice because the Lord is near. In the Gospel reading, John the Baptist directs everyone's attention to the One who is in the midst of his people, although they do not recognize him: "One who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals" (Mk. 1:7). John reminds us all that our mission is to witness to the presence of Christ in the world. Advent's proposal of the important value of *discernment* challenges us to abandon comfortable, ambiguous or automatic attitudes so as to discover, in the light of God, the profound value of all things. God, who calls us incessantly, is faithful to his promises. The long-awaited Messiah is not a merciless and rigid judge; on the contrary, he was sent "to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted" (Is. 61:1).

Lighting of the Third Candle of Advent

*Lord, in lighting this candle
we keep in mind that you want
to journey alongside the people of all times.
We are ready to welcome
the voice inviting us
to prepare a way for you:
with a faith that sees your hidden presence
in the deeds performed by people of good will,
in a hope that wagers on a world
conformed to your will,
and on a love transformed into gift day after day.
Lord, in lighting this third candle
we ask you to transform us into lights
that illuminate the crossroads of the world
and that witness to the One
who wanted to share our human condition.
Your presence is our joy.
Come quickly, Jesus our Savior!*

