



# Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Advent (A)  
December 8, 2019

## Preparing Ourselves

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

John the Baptist was a prophet who fully embraced his mission in Israel. He was so good at delivering his message that some people thought he was the Messiah. He preached with authority, and people traveled from all over Judea to hear his words.

His mission was to prepare the way, but not just for any man. As any pope, king, or president announces his intentions in advance so preparations can be made, John was sent to announce the coming of the Son of God and to tell the people how to prepare.

Jesus came into the world when he

was born in Bethlehem and walked the earth. He will come again at the end of time. And—importantly—he comes to us whenever we invite him in and always in the sacraments and liturgy. Preparing for his arrival is not a matter of fixing roads, painting houses, or organizing a parade. Our king desires a transformed spirit: “Not by appearance shall he judge (Isaiah 11:3). John warns that we cannot hide behind the faith of another; each one of us needs to show the fruits of our own faith. Yet we need not fear, for he who comes has every intention of saving us. He appears as Lord and invites us to accept his kingdom. He is also a teacher who shows us the way to the Father. Above all he is a friend who forgives unconditionally and accepts our sincere yet feeble efforts.

This week, reflect on the life of John the Baptist, heed his words, and imitate him: cry out for repentance, cleanse others of their sins, and prepare the way to God. +

***John warns that we cannot hide behind another's faith; we need to show the fruits of our own faith.***

## A Word from Pope Francis

It is the mystery of Christ's flesh: one doesn't understand love for thy neighbor, one doesn't understand love for thy brother if one doesn't understand this mystery of Incarnation. I love my brother because he too is Christ, is Christlike, is the flesh of Christ.

—Visit to Pentecostal Church of Reconciliation, July 28, 2014



## Sunday Readings

### Isaiah 11:1–10

He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide fairly for the land's afflicted.

### Romans 15:4–9

Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God.

### Matthew 3:1–12

[John the Baptist said,] “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.”

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How does John the Baptist's call to repentance challenge me?
- Where do I need to ask for God's mercy?

# A Christian Perspective on Time

By Jim and Susan Vogt

**H**ave you ever: ...texted a coworker during the family meal? ...tried to drive while putting on makeup? ...raced out of the house and then remembered you forgot to turn off the iron? These are symptoms of our hurried lives.

The Bible passage Susan recalls when tempted to pack too much into too little time is Jesus' "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part" (Luke 10:41–42). Mary had chosen presence—to sit with Jesus and attend to him.

The irony is the Church calendar asks us to slow down during Advent—the very time that cultural demands press us to hurry up and crowd more into Christmastime. Advent should be calm and reflective, not hectic and stressful. Jesus makes it clear that attentiveness to the person next to us always trumps Martha's to-do list.

So how do we sort it all out when our lives are filled with the expectation to do more and do it faster? Let's look at time through the prisms of saving, wasting, and ignoring.

## Saving Time

Saving time sounds virtuous, especially when it frees us from mundane chores



in order to spend quality time with our family. Some examples: multitasking allows us to fold laundry while watching TV, catch up on kids' news while driving them to school, listen to a podcast while exercising. Timesaving technology allows us to skip commercials when watching a recorded TV

program or shorten time-consuming chores by using home appliances.

These things are good when they free us to do more important tasks, especially those that focus on those around us. But doing tasks faster and more efficiently can be like a hamster running around a wheel. Sometimes we don't really get anywhere.

## Wasting Time

Wasting time sounds inherently bad, but consider these ways that it can enhance your life:

Time for reflection, prayer, or savoring a sunset may seem unproductive unless you realize that spending time with God isn't a waste. These times keep us centered on what is important, calming our weary and stressed-out spirits.

Sabbath time. Sunday as a day of rest has become an American anomaly. Too often, Sunday is a catchup day, filled with shopping and household chores. At times, accomplishing these tasks reduces

stress. But a day of rest with focus on God and family refreshes our spirits, pulling us back into what's important.

Recreation. Yes, some people fritter away hours before the TV, at parties, or playing sports. Recreation, however, isn't only fun, but it's also a way to build marriage, parenting, and friendship bonds. Besides, it can double as networking and relationship time, which puts it in the category of multitasking.

## Ignoring Time

Is ignoring time irresponsible? There are deadlines to meet, kids to feed, a dish to make for the potluck. But sometimes it's healthy to ignore time. Children often prompt us to ignore time when they interrupt us. Think of it as Jesus breaking into your life and saying, "Pay attention to me. I'm only here for a short time."

Which brings us back to Advent—the season of waiting. Sometimes it's good for the soul to wait—in line, for a birthday, for marriage, for Christmas. It's a pause that gives us a chance to take a deep breath and remember what's really important, to listen to Christ speaking in the silence. +



*Lord, you have created me for goodness, love, compassion, and peace. Help me to make use of the gifts you have given me to make a difference where I am at this moment of my life.*

—From *Joyful Meditations for Every Day of Advent and the 12 Days of Christmas*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

December 9–14

**Monday**, Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Gn 3:9–15, 20 / Eph 1:3–6, 11–12 / Lk 1:26–38

**Tuesday**, Advent Weekday: Is 40:1–11 / Mt 18:12–14

**Wednesday**, Advent Weekday: Is 40:25–31 / Mt 11:28–30

**Thursday**, Our Lady of Guadalupe: Zec 2:14–17 or Rv 11:19a, 12:1–6a, 10ab / Lk 1:26–38 or Lk 1:39–47

**Friday**, St. Lucy: Is 48:17–19 / Mt 11:16–19

**Saturday**, St. John of the Cross: Sir 48:1–4, 9–11 / Mt 17:9a, 10–13