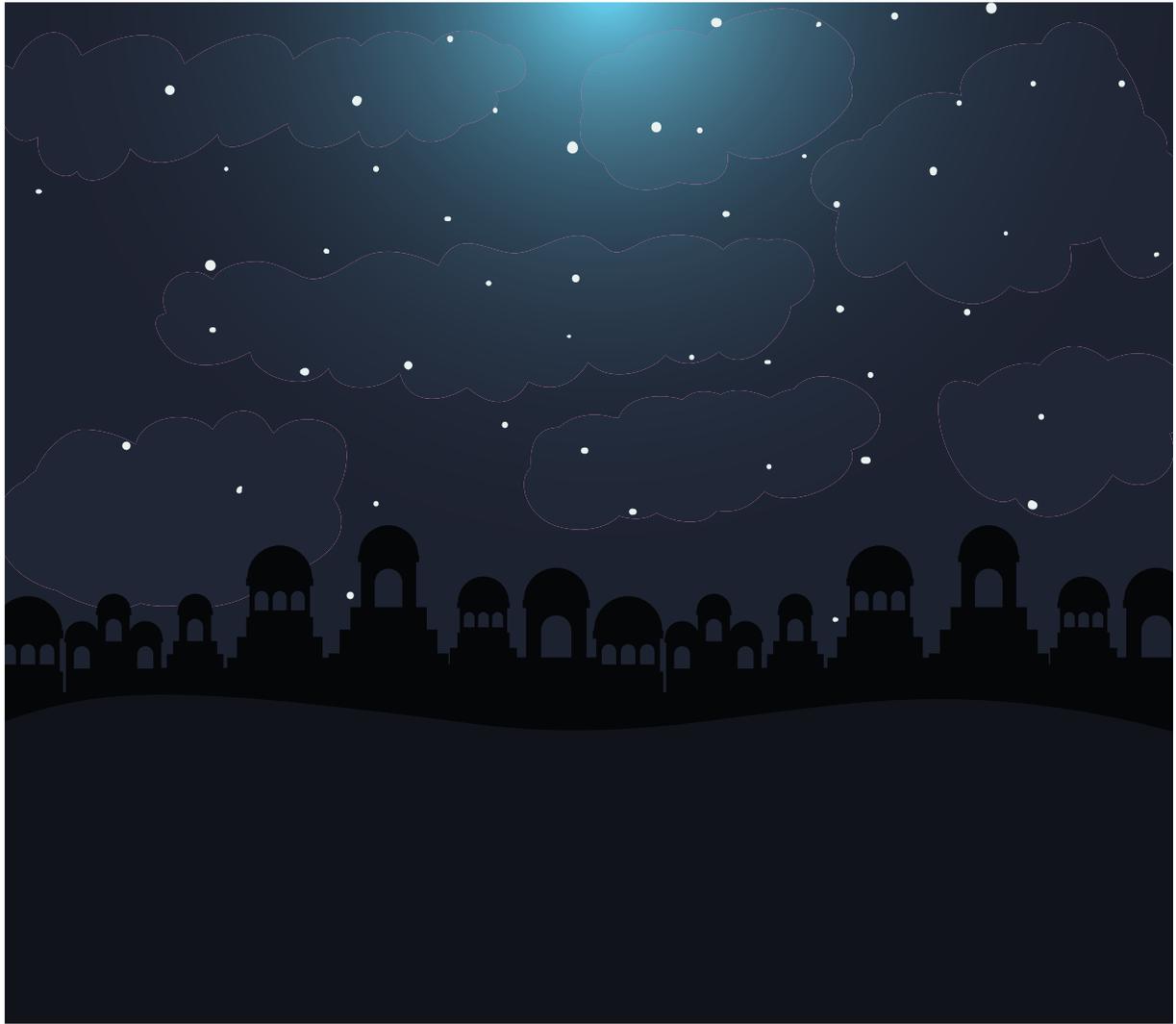




ADVENT • WEEK 3



REMEMBERING JOHN THE BAPTIST AND MARY

WITH CHRIS MOSS



SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

HONORING JOHN THE BAPTIST AT ADVENT

On the third week of Advent, we honor John the Baptist

“Your prophet John the Baptist was witness to the true as a burning and shining light. May we, your servants, rejoice in his light, and so be led to winter to him who is the Lord of our coming kingdom, Jesus our Savior and King of the ages.” –Father William Saunders, Dean of the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College and pastor of Our Lady of Hope Parish in Sterling, VA

The high points of John the Baptist in scripture is that when his aging mother, Elizabeth, carried him in her womb and met up with her cousin Mary, the Virgin who carried Jesus, he leapt in her womb. Clearly, there was a special bond. As moms, we can reflect on that and guess what came next, but beyond our instincts, the Bible gives us nothing more to go on. Did the cousins hang out? Did they know one another at all? Or did they know each other on a level we won't know till we get to heaven?

“He grew up strong in spirit, prepared the people for the coming of the Lord, and baptized them in the Jordan to wash away their sins.” Father William Saunders

Scripture next tells us he is wandering in the wilderness, dressed in fur, eating locusts and honey and proclaiming the coming of the Messiah! I wonder what his parents thought.

Were they agreeable that he responded so dramatically to Christ? How would my parents have reacted if I was like John the Baptist? If one of my kids turned out like that, would I be blessed? Or would I be rushing him to the Behavioral Health Center? And yet, at Advent, we are encouraged to honor John the Baptist.

“Help us who have been baptized into Christ, to be ready to welcome him into our hearts, and to grow strong in faith by the power of the Spirit.” Father William Saunders

More important, as spiritually single wives, how would our husbands feel about us if we sold out like John the Baptist?

As Advent progresses, the Church turns us more and more from preparing for Christ's Birth at Christmas to preparing for His Second Coming. In the Scripture Reading for the Third Monday of Advent, the Prophet Isaiah paints a picture of the world after the Second Coming: No more tears; no more idols; food and water in plenty; the world lit with a bright light, signifying the renewal of the earth. All the nations shall see the power of Christ and glorify the God of Israel.



SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

HONORING THE VIRGIN MARY AT ADVENT

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

Wow! An angel appeared and spoke to a young woman! When I got pregnant, an angel did not appear to clue me in, I got morning sickness and had to figure it out on my own! As a mom, I know how special each of my kids is to me and I know they became special when they were just a twinkle in my dream, before I conceived. I cannot imagine how exciting this pregnant mama must have been!

In Protestant circles, there is little discussion of Mary, but she plays a significant role in Jesus' life and our faith, especially at Advent. Mary Madden, Educational Director of San Rafael Catholic Church in San Diego explains:

"Mary is, in some sense, ADVENT PERSONIFIED. God prepared her from the first moment of her life and conception to be a worthy Mother of His Son. Mary became the first person in all of history to receive and accept Christ as her Savior [in utero!]... She accepted this important calling knowing that there would be many who would not understand and probably judge her. Mary totally surrendered herself to God."

Mary waited nine months for the birth of a promised Savior and King—a birth that was surprisingly humble. She had been prepared her whole life to be the Mother of God—to raise this child in the environment that God provided. With a mother's heart, she watched him mature into a man as she encouraged others to follow him—after all, she had the inside track! She waited and she watched, I can only imagine her pride, as he grew into a respected Rabbi.



SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Then watched in horror as he was betrayed, tortured and brutally killed. I cannot stand to see my own children suffer even the normal ups and downs of life, so I simply cannot imagine Mary's pain...

At Advent, how can we follow Mary's example of waiting and watching? How can we, as spiritually single wives encourage others to follow Him? As Advent progresses, the Church turns us more and more from preparing for Christ's Birth at Christmas to preparing for His Second Coming. In the Scripture Reading for the Third Monday of Advent, the Prophet Isaiah paints a picture of the world after the Second Coming: No more tears; no more idols; food and water in plenty; the world lit with a bright light, signifying the renewal of the earth. All the nations shall see the power of Christ and glorify the God of Israel.

[The selection of readings below comes from the Office of the Readings, part of the Liturgy of the Hours, the official prayer of the (Catholic) Church. I intentionally changed the translation to The Message so it is more easily understood by those with a limited exposure to Advent, like me.]

A white silhouette illustration of a nativity scene, showing Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus in a manger, set within a stable structure. The illustration is positioned in the top left corner of the page.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ISAIAH 29:13-24

As we begin the third week of Advent, we see that the Lord has passed His judgment on Israel, whose obedience to His Word is, at best, merely out of habit. Indeed, many of the children of Israel no longer even acknowledge Him as Lord. Therefore, the gospel will be preached to all nations by Christ.

LIGHT TWO PURPLE CANDLES AND ONE PINK CANDLE THEN READ ALOUD:

The Master said:

“These people make a big show of saying the right thing,
but their hearts aren’t in it.

Because they act like they’re worshiping me but don’t mean it,
I’m going to step in and shock them awake,
astonish them, stand them on their ears.

The wise ones who had it all figured out will be exposed as fools.

The smart people who thought they knew everything
will turn out to know nothing.”

Doom to you! You pretend to have the inside track.

You shut GOD out and work behind the scenes,
Plotting the future as if you knew everything,
acting mysterious, never showing your hand.

You have everything backward!

You treat the potter as a lump of clay.

Does a book say to its author,
“He didn’t write a word of me”?

Does a meal say to the woman who cooked it,
“She had nothing to do with this”?

And then before you know it,

and without you having anything to do with it,

Wasted Lebanon will be transformed into lush gardens,
and Mount Carmel reforested.

At that time the deaf will hear word-for-word what’s been written.

After a lifetime in the dark, the blind will see.

The castoffs of society will be laughing and dancing in GOD,
the down-and-outs shouting praise to The Holy of Israel.

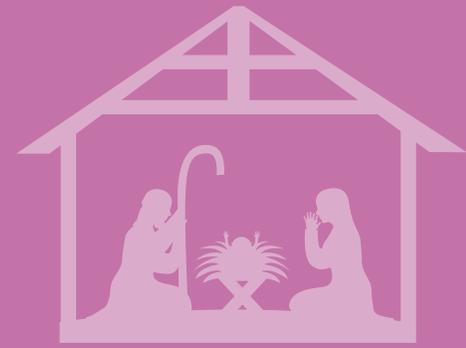
For there’ll be no more gangs on the street.

Cynical scoffers will be an extinct species.

continued....

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ISAIAH 29:13-24



Those who never missed a chance to hurt or demean
will never be heard of again:

Gone the people who corrupted the courts,
gone the people who cheated the poor,
gone the people who victimized the innocent.

And finally this, GOD's Message for the family of Jacob,
the same GOD who redeemed Abraham:

"No longer will Jacob hang his head in shame,
no longer grow gaunt and pale with waiting.

For he's going to see his children,
my personal gift to him—lots of children.

And these children will honor me by living holy lives.

In holy worship they'll honor the Holy One of Jacob
and stand in holy awe of the God of Israel.

Those who got off-track will get back on-track,
and complainers and whiners learn gratitude."

THIRD MONDAY OF ADVENT

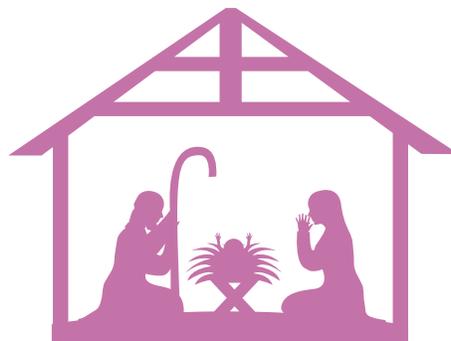
ISAIAH 30:18-26

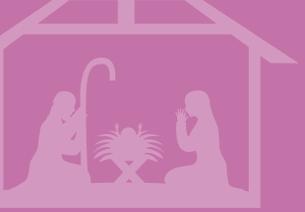
As we await the birth of Christ at Christmas, we also look forward to His Second Coming and, in the words of the Creed, "the life of the world to come." In the reading for the third Monday of Advent, the Prophet Isaiah gives us a glimpse of that world: no more hunger; no more pain; the Lord Himself living with us; man and the earth completely healed.

But God's not finished. He's waiting around to be gracious to you.
He's gathering strength to show mercy to you.
God takes the time to do everything right—everything.
Those who wait around for him are the lucky ones.

Oh yes, people of Zion, citizens of Jerusalem, your time of tears is over.
Cry for help and you'll find it's grace and more grace. The moment he hears, he'll answer. Just as the Master kept you alive during the hard times, he'll keep your teacher alive and present among you. Your teacher will be right there, local and on the job, urging you on whenever you wander left or right: "This is the right road. Walk down this road." You'll scrap your expensive and fashionable god-images. You'll throw them in the trash as so much garbage, saying, "Good riddance!"

God will provide rain for the seeds you sow. The grain that grows will be abundant. Your cattle will range far and wide. Oblivious to war and earthquake, the oxen and donkeys you use for hauling and plowing will be fed well near running brooks that flow freely from mountains and hills. Better yet, on the Day God heals his people of the wounds and bruises from the time of punishment, moonlight will flare into sunlight, and sunlight, like a whole week of sunshine at once, will flood the land.





THIRD TUESDAY OF ADVENT

ISAIAH 30:27-33; 31:4-9

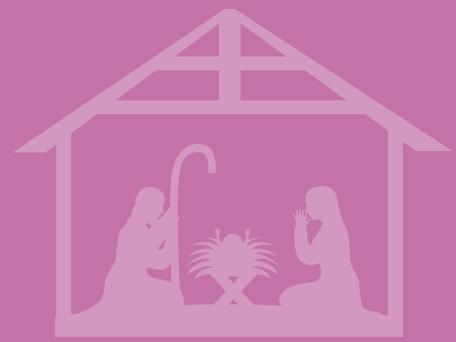
Preparing for the Second Coming of Christ . . . But the Second Coming will not simply bring joy and plenty; it will bring destruction, too. The powers of men signified in the Scripture Reading for the Third Tuesday of Advent by Assyria will be destroyed. Our own fate will be decided by our actions: If we have prepared ourselves properly for Christ's Second Coming, then like the just man in the Scripture Reading for the Third Wednesday of Advent we will have nothing to fear; but if we continue to live in evil and deceit, we, too, will be destroyed.

At His Second Coming, Christ will not only reign over all the earth; but all the powers of the earth will be destroyed. In this reading for the third Tuesday of Advent, the Lord destroys Assyria, which stands for the powers of men.

Look, GOD's on his way, and from a long way off!
Smoking with anger, immense as he comes into view,
Words steaming from his mouth, searing, indicting words!
A torrent of words, a flash flood of words
sweeping everyone into the vortex of his words.
He'll shake down the nations in a sieve of destruction,
herd them into a dead end.
But you will sing, sing through an all-night holy feast!
Your hearts will burst with song,
make music like the sound of flutes on parade,
En route to the mountain of GOD, on the way to the Rock of Israel.
GOD will sound out in grandiose thunder,
display his hammering arm,
Furiously angry, showering sparks— cloudburst, storm, hail!
Oh yes, at GOD's thunder Assyria will cower under the clubbing.
Every blow GOD lands on them with his club
is in time to the music of drums and pipes,
GOD in all-out, two-fisted battle, fighting against them.
Topheth's fierce fires are well prepared, ready for the Assyrian king.
The Topheth furnace is deep and wide,
well stoked with hot-burning wood.
GOD's breath, like a river of burning pitch, starts the fire.

THIRD TUESDAY OF ADVENT

ISAIAH 30:27-33; 31:4-9



This is what GOD told me:
Like a lion, king of the beasts, that gnaws and chews and worries its prey,
Not fazed in the least by a bunch of shepherds
who arrive to chase it off,
So GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies comes down
to fight on Mount Zion, to make war from its heights.
And like a huge eagle hovering in the sky,
GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies protects Jerusalem.
I'll protect and rescue it.
Yes, I'll hover and deliver."

Repent, return, dear Israel, to the One you so cruelly abandoned.
On the day you return, you'll throw away—every last one of you—
the no-gods your sinful hands made from metal and wood.
"Assyrians will fall dead, killed by a sword-thrust but not by a soldier,
laid low by a sword not swung by a mortal.
Assyrians will run from that sword, run for their lives,
and their prize young men made slaves.
Terrorized, that rock-solid people will fall to pieces,
their leaders scatter hysterically."
GOD's Decree on Assyria.
His fire blazes in Zion, his furnace burns hot in Jerusalem.

THIRD WEDNESDAY OF ADVENT

ISAIAH 31:1-3; 32:1-8

In this reading for the third Wednesday of Advent, the Prophet Isaiah tell us that, at the Second Coming, Christ will establish perfect justice. Those who are evil and deceitful will no longer get their way. In the world to come, the just man can live free from the distractions of sin.

Doom to those who go off to Egypt thinking that horses can help them,
Impressed by military mathematics, awed by sheer numbers of chariots and riders—
And to The Holy of Israel, not even a glance, not so much as a prayer to GOD.
Still, he must be reckoned with, a most wise God who knows what he's doing.

He can call down catastrophe.

He's a God who does what he says.

He intervenes in the work of those who do wrong, stands up against interfering evildoers.

Egyptians are mortal, not God, and their horses are flesh, not Spirit.

When GOD gives the signal, helpers and helped alike
will fall in a heap and share the same dirt grave.

But look! A king will rule in the right way, and his leaders will carry out justice.

Each one will stand as a shelter from high winds,
provide safe cover in stormy weather.

Each will be cool running water in parched land,
a huge granite outcrop giving shade in the desert.

Anyone who looks will see, anyone who listens will hear.

The impulsive will make sound decisions,
the tongue-tied will speak with eloquence.

No more will fools become celebrities,
nor crooks be rewarded with fame.

For fools are fools and that's that, thinking up new ways to do mischief.

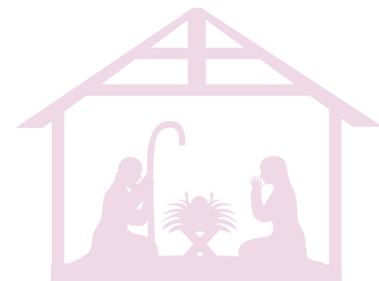
They leave a wake of wrecked lives and lies about GOD,

Turning their backs on the homeless hungry,
ignoring those dying of thirst in the streets.

And the crooks? Underhanded sneaks they are,
inventive in sin and scandal,

Exploiting the poor with scams and lies, unmoved by the victimized poor.

But those who are noble make noble plans,
and stand for what is noble.

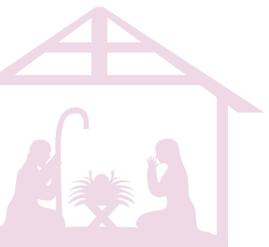


THIRD THURSDAY OF ADVENT

ISAIAH 32:15-33:6

In the reading for the third Thursday of Advent, the Prophet Isaiah once again describes the coming of the Lord. We believe that Christ comes twice: first, at Christmas; and second, at the end of time. These prophecies of the reign of the Lord began to be fulfilled when Christ was born and brought new life into the world; they will be completed at His Second Coming.

Yes, weep and grieve until the Spirit is poured
down on us from above
And the badlands desert grows crops
and the fertile fields become forests.
Justice will move into the badlands desert.
Right will build a home in the fertile field.
And where there's Right, there'll be Peace
and the progeny of Right: quiet lives and endless trust.
My people will live in a peaceful neighborhood—
in safe houses, in quiet gardens.
The forest of your pride will be clear-cut,
the city showing off your power leveled.
But you will enjoy a blessed life,
planting well-watered fields and gardens,
with your farm animals grazing freely.
The Ground Under Our Feet Mourns
Doom to you, Destroyer, not yet destroyed;
And doom to you, Betrayer, not yet betrayed.
When you finish destroying, your turn will come—destroyed!
When you quit betraying, your turn will come—betrayed!
GOD, treat us kindly. You're our only hope.
First thing in the morning, be there for us!
When things go bad, help us out!
You spoke in thunder and everyone ran.
You showed up and nations scattered.
Your people, for a change, got in on the loot,
picking the field clean of the enemy spoils.
GOD is supremely esteemed. His center holds.
Zion brims over with all that is just and right.
GOD keeps your days stable and secure—
salvation, wisdom, and knowledge in surplus,
and best of all, Zion's treasure, Fear-of-GOD.



THIRD FRIDAY OF ADVENT

ISAIAH 33:7-24

As the third week of Advent draws to a close, the prophecy of Isaiah shifts more completely to the coming of the Lord at the end of time. In this reading for the third Friday of Advent, the earth will be cleansed with fire, and only the just man will emerge. He will live in the eternal Jerusalem, ruled by Christ.



But look! Listen!
Tough men weep openly.
Peacemaking diplomats are in bitter tears.
The roads are empty—
not a soul out on the streets.
The peace treaty is broken,
its conditions violated,
its signers reviled.
The very ground under our feet mourns,
the Lebanon mountains hang their heads,
Flowering Sharon is a weed-choked gully,
and the forests of Bashan and Carmel? Bare
branches.
“Now I’m stepping in,” GOD says.
“From now on, I’m taking over.
The gloves come off.
Now see how mighty I am.
There’s nothing to you.
Pregnant with chaff,
you produce straw babies;
full of hot air, you self-destruct.
You’re good for nothing but fertilizer and fuel.
Earth to earth—and the sooner the better.
“If you’re far away,
get the reports on what I’ve done,
And if you’re in the neighborhood,
pay attention to my record.
The sinners in Zion are rightly terrified;
the godless are at their wit’s end:
‘Who among us can survive this firestorm?
Who of us can get out of this purge
with our lives?’”
The answer’s simple:
Live right, speak the truth, despise exploitation,
refuse bribes, reject violence,
avoid evil amusements.

This is how you raise your standard of living!
A safe and stable way to live.
A nourishing, satisfying way to live.
God Makes All the Decisions Here
Oh, you’ll see the king—a beautiful sight!
And you’ll take in the wide vistas of land.
In your mind you’ll go over the old terrors:
“What happened to that Assyrian inspector who
condemned and confiscated?
And the one who gouged us of taxes?
And that cheating moneychanger?”
Gone! Out of sight forever! Their insolence
nothing now but a fading stain on the carpet!
No more putting up with a language you can’t
understand,
no more sounds of gibberish in your ears.
Just take a look at Zion, will you?
Centering our worship in festival feasts!
Feast your eyes on Jerusalem,
a quiet and permanent place to live.
No more pulling up stakes and moving on,
no more patched-together lean-tos.
Instead, GOD! GOD majestic, God himself the
place in a country of broad rivers and streams,
But rivers blocked to invading ships,
off-limits to predatory pirates.
For GOD makes all the decisions here. GOD is our
king.
GOD runs this place and he’ll keep us safe.
Ha! Your sails are in shreds,
your mast wobbling,
your hold leaking.
The plunder is free for the taking, free for all—
for weak and strong, insiders and outsiders.
No one in Zion will say, “I’m sick.”
Best of all, they’ll all live guilt-free.

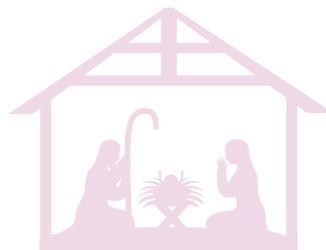
THIRD SATURDAY OF ADVENT

ISAIAH 45:1-13

December 17: During the last eight days before Christmas December 17-24, the prescribed readings include the greatest prophecies from the Book of Isaiah. Today, we read of a Christ-figure: Cyrus the Great, king of the Persians, whom God used as a protector of the Jews, even though Cyrus did not profess faith in Him. The works ascribed to Cyrus are those that are later performed by Christ.

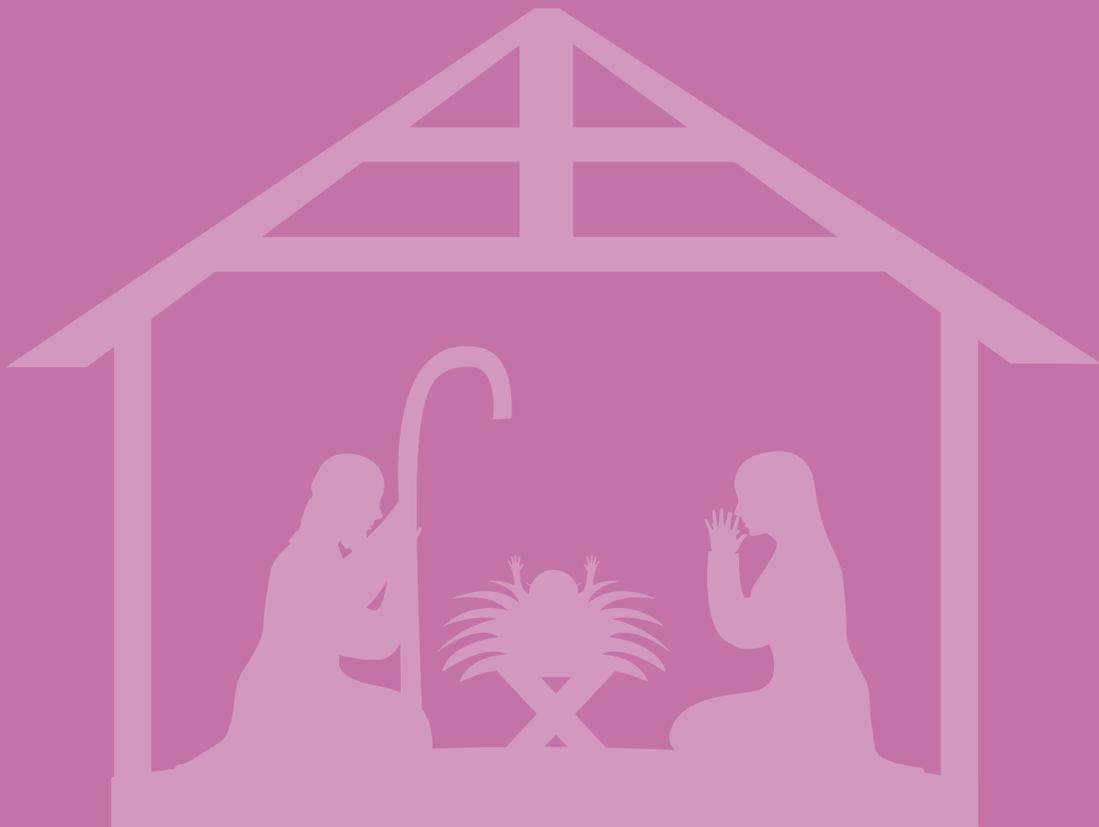
GOD's Message to his anointed,
to Cyrus, whom he took by the hand
To give the task of taming the nations,
of terrifying their kings—
He gave him free rein,
no restrictions:
"I'll go ahead of you,
clearing and paving the road.
I'll break down bronze city gates,
smash padlocks, kick down barred entrances.
I'll lead you to buried treasures,
secret caches of valuables—
Confirmations that it is, in fact, I, GOD,
the God of Israel, who calls you by your name.
It's because of my dear servant Jacob,
Israel my chosen,
That I've singled you out, called you by name,
and given you this privileged work.
And you don't even know me!
I am GOD, the only God there is.
Besides me there are no real gods.
I'm the one who armed you for this work,
though you don't even know me,
So that everyone, from east to west, will know
that I have no god-rivals.
I am GOD, the only God there is.
I form light and create darkness,
I make harmonies and create discords.
I, GOD, do all these things.

"Open up, heavens, and rain.
Clouds, pour out buckets of my goodness!
Loosen up, earth, and bloom salvation;
sprout right living.
I, GOD, generate all this.
But doom to you who fight your Maker—
you're a pot at odds with the potter!
Does clay talk back to the potter:
'What are you doing? What clumsy fingers!'
Would a sperm say to a father,
'Who gave you permission to use me
to make a baby?'
Or a fetus to a mother,
'Why have you cooped me up in this belly?'"
Thus GOD, The Holy of Israel, Israel's Maker, says:
"Do you question who or what I'm making?
Are you telling me what I can or cannot do?
I made earth,
and I created man and woman to live on it.
I handcrafted the skies
and direct all the constellations in their turnings.
And now I've got Cyrus on the move.
I've rolled out the red carpet before him.
He will build my city.
He will bring home my exiles.
I didn't hire him to do this. I told him.
I, GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies."



ADVENT WEEK 3

REMEMBERING JOHN THE BAPTIST AND MARY



ALL TEXT BOXES EXPLAIN THE CONCEPT EACH DAILY
SCRIPTURE IS MEANT TO CONVEY.

ALL WERE WRITTEN BY:

SCOTT P. RICHERT, CATHOLICISM EXPERT

[HTTP://CATHOLICISM.ABOUT.COM/OD/HOLYDAYSANDHOLIDAYS/P/ADVENT.HTM](http://catholicism.about.com/od/holydaysandholidays/p/advent.htm)

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