LIVING  LITURGY™

LIVING LITURGY™

Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis
for Sundays and Solemnities

Year B • 2027

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INTRODUCTION

As a premier Catholic publisher, Liturgical Press remains committed to offering liturgical, spiritual, and scriptural resources rooted in the Benedictine tradition with a desire to deepen the faith and knowledge of today's richly diverse church. While these resources have changed and developed over the years, the commitment to sound theology and best pastoral practice remain hallmarks of our mission and ministry. *Living Liturgy*™ is one of our most loved and widely used incarnations of this commitment.

Living Liturgy helps people prepare for liturgy and live a liturgical spirituality—a way of living that is rooted in liturgy. The paschal mystery is the central focus of liturgy, of the gospels, and of this volume. As Pope Francis reminded us in his apostolic letter on liturgical formation, in the liturgy the paschal mystery is "rendered present and active by means of signs addressed to the senses (water, oil, bread, wine, gestures, words), so that the Spirit, plunging us into the paschal mystery, might transform every dimension of our life, conforming us more and more to Christ" (*Desiderio desideravi* 21). *Living Liturgy* is therefore more than a title. Rather, "living liturgy" is a commitment to a relationship with Jesus Christ, embodied in our everyday actions and interactions.

From its beginnings over 25 years ago, *Living Liturgy* has supported liturgical spirituality in distinctive ways, and with *Living Liturgy* 2027 we have streamlined this classic resource in order to highlight its unique features and pathways: centering each Sunday or solemnity by reflecting on the gospel; making connections between the gospel, readings, and psalm; making connections to our lived experience and how we grow deeper in the paschal mystery through our participation in the liturgy each week; offering insights into liturgical spirituality for particular liturgical ministries; and offering practical ideas for preparing the liturgy and its prayers.

At its heart, *Living Liturgy* is a resource for spiritual reflection, for presiders, preachers, lectors, music ministers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, ministers of hospitality, members of the assembly, environment and catechumenal teams, liturgists, liturgy committees, and more. Now in a portable but substantial format, we hope this edition of *Living Liturgy* will continue to help foster liturgical participation and make liturgical spirituality a lived reality.



SEASON OF ADVENT

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION
Ps 85:8

℟. Alleluia, alleluia.
Show us, Lord, your love;
and grant us your salvation.
℟. Alleluia, alleluia.



Gospel

Mark 13:33-37; L2B

Jesus said to his disciples:
"Be watchful! Be alert!
You do not know when the time will come.
It is like a man traveling abroad.
He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work,
and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch.
Watch, therefore;
you do not know when the lord of the house is coming,
whether in the evening, or at midnight,
or at cockcrow, or in the morning.
May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.
What I say to you, I say to all: 'Watch!' "

Praying with Gospel Words and Phrases

Be alert . . . Watch . . . You do not know . . .

Reflecting on the Gospel

Advent is perhaps the most difficult season for the liturgy to feel like it meshes well with everything else going on in life. Lent coincides with the darkest coldest days of winter. Easter aligns with warming days and the earth itself springing back to life. In Advent, though, no matter how well the liturgy and music are crafted and executed, it can feel that these efforts, while working against the pervasive, secular "Christmas spirit" that imbues almost everything outside the church doors at this time of year, are nearly meaningless.

The mismatch is more than this dichotomy, however. Perhaps you've heard in a variety of circumstances the expression, "Participate, don't anticipate." Or perhaps while anxiously waiting for a hospital test result, you've realized that not knowing is the worst part of that waiting. The human condition is one of always wanting what it wants right away; of always wanting to know what is happening right now and what will be happening next; of always wanting power and influence over all these things and more. So indeed, Advent can be a time of fruitful opposition to quite a lot of the human existence—if we let it be so. And we should!

The gospel that begins our new liturgical year admonishes us, the faithful, to watch and be alert. Why? Because, simply, we do not know. In this pericope what is unknown is "when the lord of the house is coming." But for each of us today, this gospel calls us to embrace the unknown, as another expression goes, and to participate, actively, in our lives of faith instead of anticipating. So in fact, the gospel is calling us, really, to not know—and to be okay with not knowing.

We don't need all the things we want, our faith teaches us. We don't need to know—we can't even understand—the mind of God, and everything that is happing now or what is coming next. We don't need power and influence; Jesus taught us by washing feet and by dying on the cross. We need only God, God who is love, hope, joy, life, and salvation. Advent teaches us this if we let it, and that all the faithful truly need is to keep faithful watch.

To the Point

Advent as a season stands in opposition to some natural human tendencies. In broad strokes: we dislike waiting, we dislike not knowing, we dislike having no power. Further, Advent calls us to replace these desires with joyful hope and eager anticipation.

Preparing to Proclaim, Preach, and Pray

Making Connections Between the Readings: While the gospel passage seems to leave little room for interpretation, the passage from Isaiah paired with it fires the imagination with each passing sentence. In your mind's eye, picture the omnipotent divine Creator literally ripping a hole in the sky and clouds to visit us on earth, and the mountains and hills trembling before God's mighty deeds. And these apocalyptic sights are ones we have asked for! The passage itself is vague, about how the faithful have wondered away from God, our sinful deeds, how we have made ourselves unclean. What is the current, modern context that informs our sharing and our hearing of these words?

If we are clay in the hands of the divine potter, into what shall our God remake us? Far too often we believe ourselves to know the answer to this question, instead of letting God form and mold us into vessels for God's own purpose and dwelling place. When seeking to align our will with God's, some self-examination may be in order: Have we ever been guilty of making God in our own image? We are probably lying if we try to answer "no."

The epistle describes the power and vitality that the grace of Jesus Christ gives to each of his disciples: enriching speech, all knowledge, and ultimately, any spiritual gift. These are given to help each of us remain faithful, stay alert, and, as the gospel bids us, keep watch in our time of waiting and unknowing.

Making Connections to the Responsorial Psalm: It seems nearly invariable that, when reflecting on the Scriptures for a given liturgy, the psalm fulfills a certain role between at least the first reading and the gospel reading, and occasionally all the Scriptures. Sometimes that function might be imagined as a bridge; sometimes as a lynchpin; sometimes as a key, unlocking new and welcome insights. Focusing in more tightly, the psalm refrain is a lens through which we see not only the rest of the psalm verses but the readings as a whole.

Recall those frightful images from the Isaiah reading, and the reproach in the gospel to keep watch. These could be seen, without the psalm, as alarming and dire. We keep watch for the divine power that rends the skies and shakes mountains not for such literal destruction, but rather for salvation: "let us see your face and we shall be saved." God comes to care for, protect, make strong, and help us, and ultimately to give us new life.

CONNECTING TO EXPERIENCE: LIVING THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

It is easy to be lazy. It is easy to "fall asleep"—to become distracted, picking up our tasks or our telephone, quietly numbing our senses, calcifying our hearts and drowning out our ability even to hear the blaring cockcrow of the Word of God. We are called to more than this. The disciples who Jesus had gathered around him had the untold blessing of beholding the living God in Christ Jesus. Through the mystery of our faith, we are Jesus's disciples. And Jesus is with us now. When we see pained faces, hurting hearts, aching bodies, or wounded spirits, we see Christ, hear him. Do we believe this? We hear in the gospel today, "Be watchful! Be alert!" Advent calls us to remember who we are. We have the grace of God bestowed on us. We can choose to be focused. We can choose to watch, to see those in front of us. We never know when we might behold the face of Christ.

PROMPTS FOR FAITH-SHARING

- How can you watch for Christ today? This Advent? Where have you forgotten to look for him?
- Where, in your life, are you "asleep" to the needs of Christ and neighbor? How can you "wake up" to a new life of being attentive?
- Which gifts has Christ given you to stay alert and to take care of his household until he returns? Which of these gifts have you been reluctant to acknowledge and why?

Model Penitential Act

Presider: In today's gospel, Jesus calls his disciples to "stay awake" and "keep watch" for the coming of the Son of Man. Preparing our hearts for his coming, let us ask for his mercy and forgiveness . . . *[pause]*

Lord Jesus, you call us out of sin and darkness: Lord, have mercy.
Christ Jesus, you offer your sinful people compassion and love: Christ, have mercy.
Lord Jesus, you are the light of life: Lord, have mercy.

Model Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

Presider: Awake and ready to follow God's will, we turn to him with our prayers and petitions.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the church throughout the world: may the faithful await with joy the light of Christ and find freedom from the darkness of sin, loneliness, and suffering, we pray . . .

For greater peace in our hearts, in our communities, and among those who lead us: may we choose the mercy of Christ as we seek fellowship with our neighbors, we pray . . .

For hearts open to the suffering of those near us and those far away: may our watchfulness this Advent season open our hearts as well as our eyes, we pray . . .

For deepening of our attention and our focus: may we reject distractions and self-absorption to be truly present to those around us, we pray . . .

Presider: Almighty and ever-living God, you are the Alpha and the Omega. As we begin this Advent season, may we remember the wonder of your love through our mercy and compassion to all the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Liturgy and Music

It is wise to mark the changing of seasons with noticeable changes throughout the liturgy. Many of these are obvious and prescribed by the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, or other guiding documents. Advent brings violet hues to vestments, the progression of the Advent wreath, the absence of the Gloria on Sundays. Beyond the omission of the Gloria, other changes in the music of the liturgy are likely more subtle. Surely, there are hymns specific to the season. Further, we can help distinguish Advent as a unique time of year by how they and all the liturgical pieces of music are presented. Changes in use of unisons and harmonies, tempos, and use of (or resting of) certain instruments can be very effective in helping our assemblies mark the passing of time, and the different character of each liturgical season.

(continued on next page)

COLLECT

Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that, gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the
heavenly Kingdom.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Isa 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7

You, LORD, are our father,
our redeemer you are named forever.
Why do you let us wander, O LORD, from
your ways,
and harden our hearts so that we fear
you not?
Return for the sake of your servants,
the tribes of your heritage.
Oh, that you would rend the heavens and
come down,
with the mountains quaking before you,
while you wrought awesome deeds we
could not hope for,
such as they had not heard of from of
old.
No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen,
any God but you
doing such deeds for those who wait for
him.
Would that you might meet us doing right,
that we were mindful of you in our
ways!
Behold, you are angry, and we are sinful;
all of us have become like unclean
people,
all our good deeds are like polluted rags;
we have all withered like leaves,
and our guilt carries us away like the
wind.
There is none who calls upon your name,
who rouses himself to cling to you;
for you have hidden your face from us
and have delivered us up to our guilt.
Yet, O LORD, you are our father;
we are the clay and you the potter:
we are all the work of your hands.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM
Ps 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19

℟. (4) Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hearken,
from your throne upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Rouse your power,
and come to save us.

℟. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Once again, O Lord of hosts,
look down from heaven, and see;
take care of this vine,
and protect what your right hand has planted,
the son of man whom you yourself made strong.

℟. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

May your help be with the man of your right hand,
with the son of man whom you yourself made strong.
Then we will no more withdraw from you;
give us new life, and we will call upon your name.

℟. Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.

SECOND READING
1 Cor 1:3-9

Brothers and sisters:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always on your account
for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus,
that in him you were enriched in every way,
with all discourse and all knowledge,
as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you,
so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift
as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
He will keep you firm to the end,
irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
God is faithful,
and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

We should be mindful that, even though it is sometimes nicknamed "Little Lent," Advent should have "joyful, anxious anticipation" as a primary effect, not penitence. Still, it may be a good time to include a sung *Kyrie* if that is not already a regular practice. Consider using one hymn as a common gathering, communion, or sending hymn for the entire season. Not only will that help unify the season, but it will give your music ministers that much more time each week to prepare for Christmas!

Liturgical Ministers: Environment Ministers

The First Sunday of Advent shapes the church's posture for the entire season. Environment ministers are called to cultivate a space that embodies watchfulness, expectation, and restraint. The sanctuary should not appear festive but convey the quiet longing of a community awaiting the Lord. The Advent wreath with its first candle serves as a focal sign, drawing the assembly into attentive prayer. Violet vestments, evergreens, and modest arrangements communicate anticipation rather than celebration. Environment ministers are formed in their ministry by practicing patience and discernment, resisting the temptation to rush the season with Christmas decorations. Each subtle change in the worship space week by week invites the assembly to enter the rhythm of Advent, teaching the value of waiting, reflection, and spiritual attentiveness. Through this ministry, environment ministers help the community encounter the mystery of Christ's coming in a measured, prayerful way, shaping both the assembly's experience and their own capacity to minister with care and reverence.

Living Liturgy: Liturgy and Community

The gospel's call to "Be watchful! Be alert!" reminds us that Christian waiting is never complacent. To watch for Christ is to cultivate awareness of God's presence in daily life and to prepare to meet Christ in those who are most in need. In our communities, this might take the form of renewed attentiveness to the lonely, the grieving, or the poor. Advent waiting is a communal act. When we support one another, carry each other's hopes, and remain faithful in prayer, we live the reality of hope together. This First Sunday of Advent invites us to see waiting not as wasted time but as holy preparation.



SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION
Luke 3:4, 6

℟. Alleluia, alleluia.
Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths:
all flesh shall see the salvation of God.
℟. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Mark 1:1-8; L5B

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

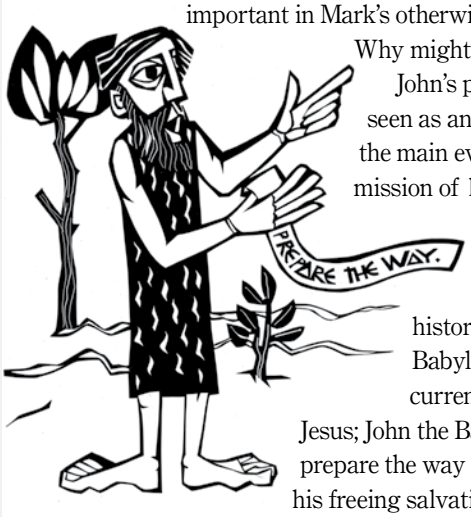
As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:
Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;
he will prepare your way.
A voice of one crying out in the desert:
"Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths."
John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.
People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins.
John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist.
He fed on locusts and wild honey.
And this is what he proclaimed:
"One mightier than I is coming after me.
I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals.
I have baptized you with water;
he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Praying with Gospel Words and Phrases

Crying out . . . proclaiming . . . forgiveness of sins . . .

Reflecting on the Gospel

Mark is the shortest canonical gospel, and it is generally acknowledged as the earliest one written. It is succinct if not abrupt, and essentially gives us only and exactly the good news we need to know. The very first words in Mark's Gospel introduce us to John the Baptist, in vivid ways that not many other figures in his Gospel receive. We hear about his ministry, what he looked like, what he ate, and many of the things he said while proclaiming the coming messiah. John is obviously important in Mark's otherwise brusque Gospel. Why might that be?



John's preaching can be seen as an overture before the main event: the salvific mission of his cousin, Jesus. The way of the Lord that is to be prepared links the historical end of the Babylonian exile to the current-day coming of Jesus; John the Baptist is on hand to prepare the way for Christ and for his freeing salvation.

More than that, John exists in this gospel to not only teach us by his words but by his example: how does one—how do we—today prepare for the coming of the Lord? Christmas, we will recall, exists as a celebration of not only the eternal Word taking on human flesh, but of that second coming at the end of human time. Taking John's example, we might today choose to live more simply than we currently do, in our attire and diets. We might choose to more freely share with those we encounter the way our lives have been impacted by our faith and our relationship with Jesus. We might more readily acknowledge our own lowliness and point, by our words and deeds, instead to the mighty God of heaven and earth.

To the Point

We too are called to make ready a straight path for God, into the hearts and minds of all the faithful, and into our own souls as well. This cannot be a passive experience, and it isn't always a quiet and inward-looking process. How do we balance the quiet stillness of the Advent season alongside the energetic needs of preparation and proclamation?

Preparing to Proclaim, Preach, and Pray

Making Connections Between the Readings: Isaiah, the prevailing prophet of Advent, rejoices this weekend as the Babylonian exile nears its end. This is what Mark's Gospel hearkens back to as it begins its proclamation of the good news. The captives are to return home, and that pathway home is to be made as direct and expedient as possible.

While often the expression is that one's faith must be more than words and must also be lived, here the prophet impels us to not only take faithful actions but to announce and proclaim the coming of the Lord. Here is the power and might of God, the care and guidance of the divine shepherd.

This godly power extends even over time itself, Peter warns us. Last week we were advised to be alert and to be ready, and even to not know what to be ready for. This week? The Lord is coming soon, whatever "soon" might mean to God. To God, a thousand years are like an evening come and gone. What might seem far off to our human senses might very well be as soon as you take your next breath. Yet the timing, on its own, is not really the point.

Rather, this unknown timing impels us not only to fervent action but to bold proclamation. At the end of the Babylonian exile all those who were displaced were gathered and returned home. It's just not enough to make sure we ourselves, individually, are prepared. No, we must make sure as many people as we can know the saving power of God and are brought into the Christian community of hope, salvation, and eternal life.

Making Connections to the Responsorial Psalm: Whereas last week we prayed by the psalm to see God's face and therefore salvation, this week the psalm seeks salvation not in a divine image but in divine kindness. Put another way, we pray this week to see God's image in action, to hear God's voice.

While our liturgical year leads us through the paschal mystery, and it might do so somewhat chronologically, it's not like we don't know the end of the story—at least thus far. Advent is both about the incarnation and about the second coming, which means we pray and live now as people in this paradoxical time sometimes called "already, not yet." Salvation has already been won but not yet attained in its fullest form. Christ, ascended, has no body, no hands nor feet nor voice, but ours. If others on earth are to know of God's mercy and salvation, that almost invariably will need to be by God's working in and through each of us.

CONNECTING TO EXPERIENCE: LIVING THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

Mark's Gospel tells us that baptism prepares us for the coming of Jesus. But for those of us who are already baptized, how do we prepare for Christ who is once *again* approaching this Advent? Baptism does not end with one day of washing. Baptism initiates us into Christ's paschal mystery. As the second letter of Peter tells us, God's arrival is marked by a fiery dissolution of all that has been, in order to clear the way for his fullness. For those of us who have been baptized, this is the fire of the Holy Spirit. This Advent, we can ask the Spirit to dissolve our struggles, our fears, and our distractions which keep us from receiving him anew at Christmas. We can focus on Christ and his coming. We come to the sacraments for his grace. His presence among us in incarnate strength is a fire that creates a new heaven and a new earth, both within us and without us!

PROMPTS FOR FAITH-SHARING

- How can you renew your baptismal commitment to Christ this Advent? What practice, habit, or prayer can you take on, that will help you to grow in the life of Christ?
- What can you wash away from your life this Advent, in order to make way for Christ?
- In this time of waiting, how can you become the presence of Christ to someone who needs you, so that you can make Christ's incarnation more complete?

Model Penitential Act

Presider: Today's reading from Isaiah enjoins us to prepare the way of the Lord! As we prepare our hearts, minds, and bodies for his coming, we ask for God's mercy . . . *[pause]*

Lord Jesus, you are the Shepherd of souls: Lord, have mercy.
Christ Jesus, you usher in a new day of pardon and peace: Christ, have mercy.
Lord Jesus, you offer us repentance and forgiveness: Lord, have mercy.

Model Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

Presider: In Christ, we seek to create a new heaven and a new earth by the power of our baptism. In the hope of this renewal, we bring our petitions to the Lord.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the church: that it may renew the earth by its faith-filled witness in the world, we pray . . .

For those who hold public office in this country and across the globe: that they may transform their civic systems to best serve God's people, we pray . . .

For those who are in need of God's mercy: that all who yearn for mercy might find courage to reach out to the God of kindness and salvation, we pray . . .

For the members of this community: that we might seek God's way with repentance, striving, and joy, we pray . . .

Presider: God of mercy, your Son, Jesus Christ, came among us in order to renew both heaven and earth in the power of his light. Hear our petitions this day and, from your merciful heart, grant us the grace to receive your forgiveness, renewal, and strength. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Liturgy and Stillness

It would be wise to be attuned to how the various senses of those in the assembly perceive what is happening in our liturgies, especially against the backdrop of what their presumed experiences are the other six days and twenty-three hours of the week. Notably, it can be quite challenging for any of us to recognize simple, quiet waiting as something active and preparatory, but so it is! In fact, in contrast to our Scriptures this weekend, sometimes stillness is the only and best thing we can do. While the Advent wreath helps us mark time, it also bids us "be patient," as for each week only certain candles may be lit while the remaining candles too must patiently wait. This can also be echoed in other pieces of the art and environment: a set of four banners, with one more revealed each passing Sunday, or indeed in the pacing of the prayers and music of the liturgy itself.

(continued on next page)

COLLECT

Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer

Almighty and merciful God,
may no earthly undertaking hinder those
who set out in haste to meet your Son,
but may our learning of heavenly wisdom
gain us admittance to his company.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Isa 40:1-5, 9-11

Comfort, give comfort to my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her
that her service is at an end,
her guilt is expiated;
indeed, she has received from the hand of the LORD
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:
In the desert prepare the way of the LORD!
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill shall be made low;
the rugged land shall be made a plain,
the rough country, a broad valley.
Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together;
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Go up onto a high mountain,
Zion, herald of glad tidings;
cry out at the top of your voice,
Jerusalem, herald of good news!
Fear not to cry out
and say to the cities of Judah:
Here is your God!
Here comes with power
the Lord GOD,
who rules by his strong arm;
here is his reward with him,
his recompense before him.
Like a shepherd he feeds his flock;
in his arms he gathers the lambs,
carrying them in his bosom,
and leading the ewes with care.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM
Ps 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14

℟. (8) Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what God proclaims;
the Lord—for he proclaims peace to his people.
Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him,
glory dwelling in our land.

℟. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Kindness and truth shall meet;
justice and peace shall kiss.
Truth shall spring out of the earth,
and justice shall look down from heaven.

℟. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

The Lord himself will give his benefits;
our land shall yield its increase.
Justice shall walk before him,
and prepare the way of his steps.

℟. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

SECOND READING
2 Pet 3:8-14

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved,
that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years
and a thousand years like one day.
The Lord does not delay his promise, as some regard "delay,"
but he is patient with you,
not wishing that any should perish
but that all should come to repentance.
But the day of the Lord will come like a thief,
and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar
and the elements will be dissolved by fire,
and the earth and everything done on it will be found out.

Continued in Appendix A, p. 261.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* instructs that there should be several moments of silence during the liturgy: during the penitential act, after the presider's invitation "let us pray," following each Scripture passage, after the homily, and following the distribution of Holy Communion. If these moments are not intentional at our liturgies, Advent is the perfect time to be more aware of how silence is a necessary component of prayerful liturgies. Elijah, we must remember, recognized the voice of God not in powerful winds, earthquakes, or fires, but in a gentle whisper.

Liturgical Ministers: Music Ministers

On the Second Sunday of Advent, music ministers participate in a ministry that forms both the assembly and themselves. Isaiah's words, "Comfort, give comfort to my people," sets a tone of consolation and preparation. Music ministers are called to embody God's mercy and nearness while echoing John the Baptist's call to readiness. Music becomes a vehicle for the assembly to internalize Scripture while shaping prayer and reflection. In their ministry, musicians learn to balance pastoral sensitivity with liturgical fidelity, choosing melodies that invite participation and pacing that allows texts to resonate rather than rush. The church reminds us that sacred music is "a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy," and its purpose is "the glory of God and the sanctification of the faithful" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 112). Through careful, prayerful attention to their ministry, music ministers form the assembly's hearts in hope, peace, and repentance. At the same time, they themselves are formed in attentiveness, discernment, and theological understanding of the interplay between music and liturgical action. This Sunday, music ministers help the community encounter a God who consoles and calls us to conversion, guiding both their own and the assembly's participation in Advent's prayerful journey.

Living Liturgy: Liturgy and Justice

John the Baptist's voice challenges us to prepare the Lord's way by straightening what is crooked and leveling what is unjust. In Peter's letter, believers are urged to live in "holiness and devotion" as they wait for the Lord's coming. For the church today, this means that Advent cannot remain only interior or private. Our preparation is lived in public witness through acts of mercy, care for the vulnerable, and persistent advocacy for justice in our communities and society at large. Valleys of poverty must be lifted, mountains of arrogance leveled, rough ways of exclusion made smooth, and systems of oppression confronted with courage. Our readiness in Advent is authentic when it reshapes our communities to reflect the justice, mercy, and peace of Christ's kingdom.