

**December 4<sup>th</sup> 2022 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent – Year A – Matthew 3:1 - 12**

<sup>1</sup>In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming,  
<sup>2</sup>“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” <sup>3</sup>This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, “The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’” <sup>4</sup>Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup>Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, <sup>6</sup>and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>7</sup>But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup>Bear fruit worthy of repentance. <sup>9</sup>Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>10</sup>Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>11</sup>“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup>His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Read and re-read</b> – out loud and slowly the Gospel.</li> <li>➤ <b>Meditate</b> - on reading as being spoken to you, an experience in your life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Pray</b> - Thanksgiving – Repentance – Petition</li> <li>➤ <b>Action</b> – Attitude (Call to change / to act /to do</li> </ul>
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This Sunday’s gospel is a long passage with many themes. We read of John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness. He is wearing the garments which were the traditional garments of the prophets. His diet is simple and taken from his environment. He also reminds us that religious leadership carries a great responsibility and often the danger of complacency. As John baptises he tells the people that the one who follows him will be the more powerful and that he is not fit to carry his sandals, he will baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire. This shows the humility of John not taking credit for his good deeds but acknowledging the fact that he listens to God and relies on Him for guidance. Are we complacent as we carry out our reasonability as religious leaders? When people see our actions and hear our words do they see the message of Jesus coming through just as we are witnessing from Pope Francis in his modest ways?

**Prayer:**

**Thank you Lord** for great leaders like Pope Francis who like John the Baptist is preaching to the wilderness of the modern world with the knowledge that Jesus is there helping and guiding him.

**Forgive us Lord** for the times that we allowed evil to discourage us and for the times that we got to big for our boots thinking we were better than others.

**Help us Lord** not to be discouraged by the evil within ourselves, the church community and the whole of Society because as with John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness, Jesus is present and all we need to do is open ourselves to his presence.

