



# Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Advent (A)  
December 4, 2022

## Creating God's Kingdom

By Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

At times, God's presence among us is so unspectacular that we need someone else to point it out—someone with a loud voice. That seems to have been the role of John the Baptist. His lifestyle and his message certainly caught everyone's attention. But when he caught their attention, he directed it away from himself to the kingdom of heaven.

He called it a kingdom because that was the government people of his time knew. (Jesus, too, often spoke of his kingdom.) However, the kingdom John referred to is not one of military power

and privilege but a "peaceable kingdom," where animals that are normally feared as predators live with each other in peace. A beautiful picture, but is it a possibility or just fantasy? The people believed that some day one would be born who would rule this way, thus enabling them to become a genuine peaceable kingdom. This kingdom would not be made of animals but of women and men of different races, cultures, and beliefs; women and men who would recognize each other's God-given uniqueness and would create genuine unity from this diversity.

John the Baptist declared that this kingdom "is at hand." Is it? Do we strive to live peacefully with the great diversity of people of our world? Or are we smug as we proclaim: "We have Abraham as our father" (Matthew 3:9), so we are right and you are wrong. The people of John's time should have known better. We should, too. John cries out to them—and to us: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matthew 3:2). +

*Do we strive to  
live peacefully with  
the great diversity  
of people of our world?*

## 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

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus.

### Matthew 3:1-12

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

## A Word from Pope Francis

God changes the desert into a sea, parched ground into springs of water....God turns his gaze to wherever sadness and loneliness abound....He comes to us in difficult situations; he fills our inner emptiness that makes room for him; he visits our existential deserts. The Lord visits us there.

Homily, Athens, December 5, 2021



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

### QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- How open are you to people of different faiths, races, or nations?
- What can you do to make real the peaceable kingdom of heaven?

# The Deeper Dramas of Our Relationships

By Fr. John F. Kavanaugh

It is first and foremost in our relationships, our families, our friends, that God is encountered, that faith is given flesh, that our theories of justice are tested out, that our prayer is made real, that dreams are actualized.

Even the great mystic teacher St. Teresa of Ávila insisted on that truth: when people came inquiring about the heights of holy prayer, she would ask how their relationships were going. And the great skeptic Freud knew it, too: the stage of the ordinary, of the family, was where the deepest dramas are played out.

Our most profound sufferings, our greatest heroics, our most significant encounters with God are here with these people we know and love, in their goodness, in their weakness. Where else do we most intimately encounter what Paul calls the “requirements” of love: those crucibles of patience, the winnowing of humility, the courage of forgiveness, the comfort of kindness?

It is easy to love humanity. It is quite another thing to love this particular family, who is so close to me, so like me. But when it happens, there is glory, even if the sword pierces the heart.

- A man entrusts his only son, merely twenty-eight but at the gate of death, to the arms of God.
- A woman sees every one of her brothers and sisters die—and she trusts.



- A young son goes to his parents with news that is first sad, and then is transformed, like a butterfly, into soaring grace.
- A spouse forgives the deep wound of infidelity.
- A child gives the mother a flower, so unexpected, for the first time.
- A husband cares for a wife, who has multiple sclerosis, for twenty years. After she parts from this world, he himself, suddenly unmoored in the abyss of Alzheimer's, is cared for by the daughter he once had to forgive.
- A mother still stands by with her teenager who seems neither kind nor appreciative.

It is all here, in our homes, in the pews of our churches, in our friends, in our families.

Here is the holy ground. Here is the face of God, the smile shining upon us, the kindly gaze upon us. These are arks of the covenant. These are the holy of holies if we only look, like Simeon; if we only see, like Anna; if only, like Mary, we take time to ponder it all in our hearts. +

Excerpted from *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas* by Fr. John F. Kavanaugh, SJ, available from Liguori Publications. Visit [Liguori.org](http://Liguori.org) to learn more and review our list of *Daybreaks* authors, including Fr. Ron Rolheiser, Sr. Dianne Bergant, Fr. Daniel Horan, and others.

***The stage of the ordinary, of the family, is where the deepest dramas play out.***

**PRAYER**

***Lord Jesus, so that by our words and our actions we may point the way to you, we pray—Be born in us, be born in our world.***

The Redemptorists

## WEEKDAY READINGS

December 5–10

Monday, Advent Weekday:  
Is 35:1–10 / Lk 5:17–26

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

Wednesday, Saint Ambrose:  
Is 40:25–31 / Mt 11:28–30

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

Friday, Advent Weekday:  
Is 48:17–19 / Mt 11:16–19

Saturday, Advent Weekday:  
Sir 48:1–4, 9–11 / Mt 17:9a, 10–13

Bringing Home  
the **Word**   
December 4, 2022

© 2022 Liguori Publications, a ministry of the Redemptorists. One Liguori Drive, Liguori, MO 63057. Scripture quotations in this publication are from the *New American Bible*, revised edition, © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, DC. The Pope Francis quotation is used with permission and copyright © 2022 *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*. All rights reserved. 1-800-325-9521. [Liguori.org](http://Liguori.org).