

# LINK — TO — LITURGY



## **Sending a Messenger** 2nd Sunday of Advent

*Link to Liturgy provides faithful resources which use the latest audiovisual means alongside traditional means to evangelize & catechize thus linking life to the Gospel & the Gospel to life. Sign up Free to Link to Liturgy.*



### **Lessons and Discussions**

#### **Page 5 – Isaiah**

*“As it is written in Isaiah the prophet”*

#### **Page 6 – Gospel**

**Entrance Antiphon – Is 30: 19, 30**

*Should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred. Another song can be substituted, but should have the same theme; this should not be the norm.*

## INTROIT

*Populus Sion**Cf. Is 30: 19, 30*

VII

**P** Eople of Zi-on behold, \* the Lord is coming to  
 save all na-tions; and the Lord shall cause you to hear  
 his ma-jes-tic voice for the joy of your heart.

**Source:** [ccwatershed.org](http://ccwatershed.org)

**Alternate options:**Hymns

Creator of the Stars of Night  
 Hark! A Herald Voice Is Calling  
 On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

**Collect – Roman Missal**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
 Amen

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,  
 one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

was made known by the message of an angel may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought to the glory of His resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen

### End Notes

- [1] Navarre Bible, Gospel of Mark pg. 68
- [2] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 287
- [3] Fr. John Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary
- [4] RSV Bible Footnotes, The book of the prophet Isaiah
- [5] Footnotes, The book of the prophet Isaiah
- [6] Navarre Bible, Gospel of Mark pg. 67
- [7] CCC 515
- [8] CCC, Glossary, pgs. 880-881
- [9] *Preface to the Commentary on Matthew*, summary and excerpts from *N/PNF 2*, 6.1036-37
- [10] CCC 126
- [11] Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Introduction to the Gospels, pg. xvii
- [12] Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Introduction to the Gospels, pg. xvi
- [13] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary, pg. 235
- [14] CCC 514
- [15] CCC 514
- [16] CCC 1229
- [17] CCC 139
- [18] St. Therese of Lisieux, ms. Autob. A 83v.
- [19] CCC 2419
- [20] Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Introduction to the Gospels, pg. xv

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

### Gospel Reading – Mark 1:1-8 – Roman Missal

*NOTE: In the Roman Catholic Tridentine Lectionary this Gospel is not read*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark  
- Glory to you O Lord

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

### Spiritual Reading

#### From a letter by Saint Ambrose, bishop

You have entered upon the office of bishop. Sitting at the helm of the Church, you pilot the ship against the waves. Take firm hold of the rudder of faith so that the severe storms of this world cannot disturb you. The sea is mighty and vast, but do not be afraid, for as Scripture says: *he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters.*

The Church of the Lord is built upon the rock of the apostles among so many dangers in the world; it therefore remains unmoved. The Church's foundation is unshakeable and firm against the assaults of the raging sea. Waves lash at the Church but do not shatter it. Although the elements of this world

constantly beat upon the Church with crashing sounds, the Church possesses the safest harbor of salvation for all in distress. Although the Church is tossed about on the sea, it rides easily on rivers, especially those rivers that Scripture speaks of: *The rivers have lifted up their voice*. These are the rivers flowing from the heart of the man who is given drink by Christ and who receives from the Spirit of God. When these rivers overflow with the grace of the Spirit, they lift up their voice.

There is also a stream which flows down on God's saints like a torrent. There is also a rushing river giving joy to the heart that is at peace and makes for peace. Whoever has received from the fullness of this river, like John the Evangelist, like Peter and Paul, lifts up his voice. Just as the apostles lifted up their voices and preached the Gospel throughout the world, so those who drink these waters begin to preach the good news of the Lord Jesus.

Drink, then, from Christ, so that your voice may also be heard. Store up in your mind the water that is Christ, the water that praises the Lord. Store up water from many sources, the water that rains down from the clouds of prophecy.

Whoever gathers water from the mountains and leads it to himself or draws it from springs, is himself a source of dew like the clouds. Fill your soul, then, with this water, so that your land may not be dry, but watered by your own springs. He who reads much and understands much, receives his fill. He who is full, refreshes others. So Scripture says: *If the clouds are full, they will pour rain upon the earth*.

Therefore, let your words be rivers, clean and limpid, so that in your exhortations you may charm the ears of your people. And by the grace of your words win them over to follow your leadership. Let your sermons be full of understanding. Solomon says: *The weapons of the understanding are the lips of the wise*; and in another place he says: *Let your lips be bound with wisdom*. That is, let the meaning of your words shine forth, let understanding blaze out. See that your addresses and expositions do not need to invoke the authority of others, but let your words be their own defense. Let no word escape your lips in vain or be uttered without depth of meaning.

### Marian Antiphon – Alma Redemptoris Mater

V  
A  
L-ma \* Redemptó-ris Ma-ter, quæ pérv- a cæ-li  
porta manes, Et stella ma-ris, succúrre cadénti súrge-  
re qui cu-rat pópu-lo: Tu quæ genu- ísti, na-tú-ra mi-  
ránte, tu-um sanctum Ge-ni-tó-rem: Virgo pri- us ac po-  
sté-ri- us, Gabri- é-lis ab o-re sumens illud Ave, pecca-  
tó-rum mi-se-ré- re.

### Alma Redemptoris Mater (English Translation)

Loving mother of the Redeemer, open door to heaven and star of the sea, come quickly to the aid of thy people, fallen indeed but striving to stand again. To nature's astonishment thou wert the mother of thy holy Creator without ceasing to be a virgin, and heard from Gabriel that greeting: "Hail." Have pity on us sinners.

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.  
R. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we to whom the incarnation of Christ Thy Son

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

Lord Jesus, up until now You have been quietly preparing me to be Your disciple. Now the time of preparation is ending. I seem to hear you say to me as once to Peter: “Will you also go away?” You were saddened then by friends who failed You. But Peter did not fail. “Lord,” he said, “to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” I stand with Peter. Through prayer and counsel, show me, Lord, where it is in Your vineyard that You want me to serve. Then give me strength to be faithful. Mary, Mother and Model, help me to respond in generous love to the call of your divine Son.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen

### Responsory – Office of Readings

Proclaim the message, in season and out of season;  
– Refute falsehood, correct error, call to obedience.

Who is able to boast as you can? You have anointed kings as champions of righteousness.  
– Refute falsehood, correct error, call to obedience.

### Isaiah – Lesson and Discussion

*“As it is written in Isaiah the prophet”*

The Gospel for today opens with a prophecy from an Old Testament prophet being applied to the last prophet, John the Baptist. The Gospel writer is quoting Isaiah, the prophet who many consider to be the prophet of prophets. **Why does John the Baptist quote Isaiah?** Out of all the prophets, Isaiah is considered the most prominent among all the prophets. “The Gospel quotes Isaiah in particular perhaps because he was the most important of the prophets who foretold the coming of the Messiah: that is why St. Jerome called Isaiah the Evangelist of the Old Testament.”[1]

**Who is Isaiah?** Isaiah was born about 760 BC in Jerusalem in the Kingdom of Judah. He was the, “author of the longest prophetic book in the Old Testament...His writing paralleled the reigns of three Judean kings, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.”[2]

**What is a prophet?** A prophet is someone who “spoke, acted, or wrote under the extraordinary influence of God to make known the divine counsels and will. Yet commonly associated with this primary function to proclaim the word of God, a prophet also prophesied by foretelling future events. His role, then, was to both proclaim and to make the proclamation credible.”[3] Jews and Christians are not the only faiths who believe in prophets. Before Christ, many of the pagans believed in prophets too. “In ancient times there were prophets of many different religions, men who claimed to speak in the name of their gods; and not infrequently they existed in large groups. Thus Elijah had to confront no less than 450 prophets of Baal on the occasion of the contest on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18).”[4]

**What was the difference between the prophets in the Bible and other prophets?** There were many differences between prophets in the Bible and other prophets. First, God appointed

the prophets of Israel... (cf. Jer. 1:9; Amos 1:9) This appointment by God meant giving up everything and risking life and limb.

“The prophet received an inner, wordless message, which he was then compelled to communicate, sometimes in lyric poetry, sometimes in prose, often making use of parables, allegories, and symbolic actions...Many prophecies were fully understood only when they came to pass.”[5]

### **VIDEO – Prophet Isaiah Prophecy about the Messiah – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 9:56**

<http://youtu.be/fVo-5Johi6Y>

This video shows Isaiah’s prophecy along with scenes from the Passion of the Christ showing the prophecy of the suffering servant being fulfilled. The images as stated are from the Passion: viewer discretion is advised.

### **Scripture Search – Isaiah’s prophecies in scripture**

Below is the scripture references between what Isaiah had prophesied and how Jesus fulfilled them. You can have the group look them up in the Bible or play a game where they have to match them.

*[Please see online lessons or Leader Guide for chart]*

### **What is the connection between prophets and Advent?**

Prophets heralded the coming of the Messiah. On the second Sunday of Advent in cycles A, B and C we hear three variations of the same story, John the Baptist coming to prepare the way for Jesus. John was the last of the prophets to foretell the coming Messiah. During Advent we prepare and wait patiently for the fulfillment of the promises all the prophets foretold.

### **Gospel – Lesson and Discussion**

**What does “Gospel” mean?** “The word ‘gospel’ means good tidings, the good news God sends to mankind through his Son. The content of this good news is, in the first place, Jesus Christ himself, his words and his actions.”[6] The term used in the Greek is *euangelizo* and it is actually a verb that means to announce good news. We must remember that the gospel is something that must be shared.

**Who wrote the Gospels?** “The Gospels were written by men who were among the first to have the faith and wanted to share it with others.”[7] “The four Gospels are the books written by the

unfolded with the killing of Kennedy, then why do we hold the Gospels in such high scrutiny when it gets so much accurate? Remember, the inspiration of the story of the gospel is to tell the good news of the coming of Jesus, the promised Messiah. This is the core message.

**Why are the Gospels important?** First, the Gospels are the source material on the life and teachings of Jesus. “The four Gospels occupy a central place because Christ Jesus is their center.”[17]

Secondly, no matter how many times we read the gospels we can find something new, fresh, and beautiful from them. “But above all it’s the Gospels that occupy my mind when I’m at prayer; my poor soul has so many needs, and yet this is the one thing needful. I’m always finding fresh lights there, hidden and enthralling meanings.”[18]

Thirdly, we can receive an indulgence by prayerfully reading Scripture for just 15 minutes a day especially the gospels. Fourth, without the gospels we do not have a mission. It is in the gospels that we read and are given our order to proclaim the good news. “When she fulfills her mission of proclaiming the Gospel, she bears witness to man, in the name of Christ, to his dignity and his vocation to the communion of persons. She teaches him the demands of justice and peace in conformity with divine wisdom.”[19]

Finally, the gospels give us access to the words and actions of Jesus Christ and thus they possess the highest authority. Because of this, “The Church acknowledges this in various ways, most obviously in the liturgy, where the Gospels are held aloft in procession, perfumed with incense, and proclaimed as the word of God. Selections from all parts of the Scriptures are represented in the Church’s lectionary, but the Gospel reading is always featured as the highpoint of the Liturgy of the Word. The belief is that Jesus is made present to his people in word and sacrament, both in the inspired accounts of the evangelists and in the consecrated elements of the Eucharist.”[20]

### **Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Prayer to Know One’s Vocation**

*This prayer can be found also in the Link to Liturgy Prayer book: Oratory: Place of Prayer pg. 29*

emitted from the Gospel's did not have vital importance in telling the Good News of Jesus Christ as Messiah.

**Do we have to believe the Gospels?** Yes. Ever since the time of the apostles, Christians must go through a form of initiation. The form has been altered through the years, but certain key elements have always stayed the same. "This journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion." [16]

**Aren't there contradictions in the Gospels?** Yes, there are variations and contradictions between the four gospels. The gospels were written by four different people at four different times speaking about someone's life over the span of three years, not to mention some of the writers were not physically there. We must not get hung up on having an exact perfect time line. Remember, the core of the gospels is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who was born of the Virgin Mary, lived, was crucified, died, was buried and resurrected from the dead. On this, all four gospels can agree.

#### **MOVIE - Vantage Point – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:29**

<http://youtu.be/vDp-08uNH0Y>

Sometimes we get very haughty when we witness something especially something that happens in an instant and is dramatic. We see in the news how an initial story will come out and then later have to be clarified or completely changed once more information and details come out. In this movie we see thousands of people gathered in a single place all looking on when the president is shot yet not one person can tell you exactly what happened perfectly.

#### **VIDEO – JFK Assassination – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:04**

<http://youtu.be/LM1VjpMy9-A>

Like wise with the movie vantage point, in a real life scenario the assassination of President John F. Kennedy we see nobody able to come up with the perfect answer. In fact, to this day there are people who have conspiracies of how Kennedy was killed. There were thousands of eyewitnesses and even video being taken yet for years people were not sure. If we can't even come up with full proof assurance of what happened right away to the events that

evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John which have for their central object Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son: his life, teachings, Passion and glorification, and his Church's beginnings under the Spirit's guidance." [8] We hold the tradition that Matthew and John were written by the apostles Matthew and John who were by the side of Jesus throughout his life. Luke and Mark were written by followers of Paul and Peter respectively. They were given the Apostolic Tradition of the true teachings of Christ. The gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are commonly referred to as the "synoptic gospels" because they are relatively in sync with their stories of Christ. The gospel of John stands in its own category.

#### **Activity – Memorize the Gospel with the animal**

Each of the gospel writers has a unique animal that represents them. The imagery of the animals and the gospel writers comes from the book of Ezekiel where he speaks of seeing a vision from Heaven and the throne of God being carried by four creatures (cf. 1:1-11). It is also mentioned in the book of Revelation, "The first creature resembled a lion, the second was like a calf, the third had a face like that of a human being, and the fourth looked like an eagle in flight." (Rev. 4:7) Many theologians have debated which animal belongs to which writer, but we normally follow the thought of St. Jerome: Matthew-Angel, Mark-Lion, Luke-Ox and John-Eagle. A way to memorize which animal goes with which gospel is the acronym "ALOE".

**Angel** (Matthew)

**Lion** (Mark)

**Ox** (Luke)

**Eagle** (John)

If you can memorize Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John then just add the letter to the book and this should help memorize and link the two. **Why are the gospel writers given their specific animal and not a different one? (For example, why is Matthew connected to the Lion or Luke with the eagle)?** As stated before, we follow St. Jerome's thought. He wrote explaining why he assigned the animals the way he did by saying, "The first face of a man signifies Matthew, who began his narrative as though about a man: 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.' The second [face signifies] Mark in whom the voice of a lion roaring in the wilderness is heard: 'A voice of one shouting in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.' The third [is the face] of the calf which prefigures that the evangelist Luke

began with Zachariah the priest. The fourth [face signifies] John the evangelist who, having taken up eagle's wings and hastening toward higher matters, discusses the Word of God.”[9]

**How were the Gospels formed?** The formation of the Gospels are distinguished in three categories[10]:

1. The life and teaching of Jesus. The Church holds firmly that the four Gospels, ‘whose historicity she unhesitatingly affirms, faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up.
2. The oral tradition. “For, after the ascension of the Lord, the apostles handed on to their hearers what he had said and done, but with that fuller understanding which they, instructed by the glorious events of Christ and enlightened by the Spirit of truth, now enjoyed.”
3. The written Gospels. “The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form; others they synthesized or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches, while sustaining the form of preaching, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus.”

**Why are there 4 Gospels?** These four gospels through the authority of the Magisterium, supported by Sacred Tradition, and guided by the Holy Spirit have been deemed to be infallible writings and divinely inspired by God. The Sacred Tradition is not to be overlooked, it is the apostolic tradition that helps validate these four gospels. “So established was the four fold Gospel canon by the late second century that writers such as St. Irenaeus were beginning to reflect on its theological significance (A.D. 180). For him, the Church’s acceptance of four Gospels signified that the good news was to spread forth in all direction – to the four winds, as it were (Against Heresies 3, 11, 8).”[11]

“Christianity recognizes and reveres four Gospels, no more and no less. Only the texts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are accepted as inspired witnesses to the life of Jesus and to what he accomplished for our salvation. These four writings stand as four pillar supporting the Church’s faith and proclamation for all time.”[12]

**Aren’t there other gospels that were written?** Yes, in fact in the Gospel of Luke he points this out, “Since indeed many have tried to tell a story of the things that have been completed among us, just as they themselves who from the beginning saw the word and ministered to him have handed down to us.” (Luke 1:1-2) These are called the “apocryphal” gospels. “Many of these exist, and new manuscripts of some of them have been discovered in the twentieth century. These apocryphas are of different types. Some may embody at least a few trustworthy oral traditions, e.g., the Gospel of Peter, and According to the Hebrews. Others are openly heretical and sought to expound erroneous, especially Gnostic views, e.g., the Gospels of Thomas, Marcion, the Twelve Apostles, and Philip. A third group of writings are pious tales, composed to satisfy popular curiosity, and deal mainly with the childhood of Christ; such as the Childhood Gospel of Thomas, the History of Joseph the Carpenter, and the Departure of Mary. There is record of twenty-one apocryphal Gospels, some available in their full narrative text.”[13]

**But none of the writers were at some key moments (Annunciation, Birth of Jesus, etc.) so how do we know that it is accurate?** This is true. There are some things that are mentioned in the Bible that were not witnessed by the writers or any of the apostles, for example, the birth of Jesus. There are also things that were not put in Scripture that the apostles did witness, but chose not to include. “Many things about Jesus interest to human curiosity do not figure in the Gospels. Almost nothing is said about his hidden life at Nazareth, and even a great part of his public life is not recounted.”[14] What we must remember is the gospels were written for people to come to believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah; the Son of God. The Gospels are not meant to be strictly a biography put in perfect chronological order. While it is true that the Gospels are some of the most historical and factual pieces of writing in history, they are first and foremost written for believers and non-believers to come to believe in Jesus Christ. “What is written in the Gospels was set down there ‘so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.’ (Jn. 20:30)”[15] After the resurrection, Jesus reveals to the apostles all of the prophecies he fulfills. He fills in any gaps they may have had concerning the prophecies (cf. Lk. 24:27) (as if rising from the dead was not enough!). So events like the Nativity could be explained by Christ telling them of His incarnation and virgin birth, while other events that were