

## First Sunday of Advent (Cycle B)

First Reading: Isaiah 63:16-17, 19; 64:1, 2-7

The Israelites had just returned from exile and were suffering economic hardship and persecution. The prophet expresses their expectation that God will intervene in human history in a dramatic way to help them. At the end of this reading, we will hear a familiar image.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

In the letter-writing style popular in Paul's day, writers would begin by extending greetings and then thank the gods for the blessings *they themselves* had received. But Paul begins his first letter to the Corinthians by thanking God for the blessings his *converts in Corinth* have received. (It may help to know that the phrase "day of the Lord" refers to Jesus coming again in glory.)

## Second Sunday of Advent (Cycle B)

First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

This passage from the book of Isaiah begins with God calling upon the prophet to encourage the Jewish people who are exiled in Babylon. The prophet is to tell them that they will be returning home soon, and the road of the return will pass through the desert. We will also hear God call the *people* to proclaim from a mountaintop the goodness of God.

Second Reading: 2 Peter 3: 8-14

The second letter of Peter was written nearly 100 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. At an earlier time, Christians had expected the Lord to return in glory quickly. But by this time, they had lost confidence that the Lord would return at all. The author doesn't want people to abandon their hope, and gives a positive interpretation to this delay.

