



## Creating God's Peaceable Kingdom

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 those 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).

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

### FOR 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?

[John the Baptist said,] "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths." MATTHEW 3:3



PHOTO BY RAWPIXEL.COM FROM PEXELS

## Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
DECEMBER 9 <i>Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> Gn 3:9–15, 20 Eph 1:3–6, 11–12 Lk 1:26–38	DECEMBER 10 <i>Advent Weekday</i> Is 40:1–11 Mt 18:12–14	DECEMBER 11 <i>Advent Weekday</i> Is 40:25–31 Mt 11:28–30	DECEMBER 12 <i>Our Lady of Guadalupe</i> Zec 2:14–17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab Lk 1:26–38 or Lk 1:39–47	DECEMBER 13 <i>St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr</i> Is 48:17–19 Mt 11:16–19	DECEMBER 14 <i>St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church</i> Sir 48:1–4, 9–11 Mt 17:9a, 10–13	DECEMBER 15 <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i> Is 35:1–6a, 10 Jas 5:7–10 Mt 11:2–11

# Dear Padre,

**An intellectual friend told me that she loves the great dogmas of Advent. I smiled and agreed, but I don't have the faintest idea what she meant!**

**D**ogma refers to Church teachings defined by an ecumenical council, including the pope, or by the pope alone acting as head of the Church. The magisterium, the Church's teaching authority, tells us these must-be-believed truths have been divinely revealed to us. During Advent, we celebrate two dogmas: the immaculate conception of Mary, which we honor tomorrow,

and the Incarnation, which includes the birth of Christ that we prepare for now.

Both dogmas speak of God's extraordinary connection with humanity. God specially gifted Mary because of her role in becoming the Mother of God. Mary, from the instant of her conception, was free from original sin. Her closeness to Jesus was established from the earliest moments of her existence.

The dogma of the Incarnation is defined simply by St. John. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). During the year, we first celebrate the Incarnation on March 25, at the solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord. Scripture and Tradition hold that Jesus was conceived in

Mary's womb when she accepted God's will by answering yes to the angel's announcement that she would bear the "Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:32). During Advent, we eagerly anticipate the result of that Incarnation, Jesus' birth.

Dogmas can sometimes seem disconnected from our lives. The customs of Advent put an everyday face on the book definitions and remind us that God lives in our midst.

[Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org](mailto:Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org)

From *Dear Padre: Questions Catholics Ask*, © 2003 Liguori Publications



### A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

*It is the mystery of Christ's flesh: one doesn't understand love for thy neighbor, one doesn't understand love for thy brother if one doesn't understand this mystery of Incarnation. I love my brother because he too is Christ, is Christlike, is the flesh of Christ.*

VISIT TO PENTECOSTAL  
CHURCH OF  
RECONCILIATION,  
JULY 28, 2014

© 2019 Liguori Publications, Liguori, MO 63057-9999. Printed in USA. *Imprimatur*: "In accordance with CIC 827, permission to publish was granted on June 27, 2019, by the Most Reverend Mark S. Rivotuso, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of St. Louis. Permission to publish is an indication that nothing contrary to Church teaching is contained in this work. It does not imply any endorsement of the opinions expressed in the publication; nor is any liability assumed by this permission." No part of this work may be used in any form without the prior written permission of Liguori Publications. Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible*, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved. To order Liguori Sunday Bulletins, call 800-325-9521, or visit [Liguori.org](http://Liguori.org).

