



*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 live and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent

We have been living through some extraordinary times! In the United States the results of the National elections seem to still be in turmoil. In our part of the country the weather has been extremely mild. It seems like we are waiting for “the other shoe to drop”!

When we spend time grappling with the words of our scripture, the time of first Isaiah (Isaiah 11:1-10) does not seem terribly different from our own times. The prophet speaks of the future, promising a leader that will come from a very unexpected place ... “*the stump of Jesse*”. We need to just look around and everything seems dead. It is hard to believe that new life, a new world will blossom from what looks dead. The section that we are given for reflection today gives us certain gifts we hear about as the gifts we are receiving in the great Sacrament of Confirmation.

*The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him:  
a spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
a spirit of counsel and of strength,  
a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD,  
and his delight shall be the fear of the LORD.*

(Isaiah 11:2-3a)

These ancient gifts, along with the gift of piety, are what we are to exercise as fully initiated Catholic Christians, as we have been Confirmed. How would our world look if those who are in leadership related to others exercising these gifts. It would mean actions would be influenced by God. It would mean that leaders would struggle to understand the actions and motives of their followers. It would mean more negotiation than imposition of the leader’s way.

The prophet is urging his followers to look into the depth of the behavior of those who share the world with them. Justice is well beyond fairness. The Hebrew Scriptures are filled with contradictions. For sins



committed out of fear. For sins committed out of indifference.  
For sins committed out of contempt. For sins committed out of impurity.  
For sins committed out of hatred. For sins committed out of laziness.  
For sins committed out of cowardice. For sins committed out of anger.  
For sins committed out of greed. For sins committed out of jealousy.  
For sins committed out of revenge. For sins committed out of disobedience.  
For sins committed out of hard-heartedness. For sins committed out of pride.  
For sins committed out of envy. For sins committed out of stinginess.  
For sins committed out of selfishness. For sins committed out of pettiness.  
For sins committed out of spite. For sins committed out of self-indulgence.  
For sins committed out of lust. For sins committed out of careless neglect.  
For sins committed out of prejudice.  
Because I am obnoxious, forgive me Lord. Because I am dishonest, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am egotistical, forgive me Lord. Because I am undisciplined, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am weak, forgive me Lord. Because I am impure, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am arrogant, forgive me Lord. Because I am self-centered, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am pompous, forgive me Lord. Because I am insincere, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am unchaste, forgive me Lord. Because I am grasping, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am judgmental, forgive me Lord. Because I am impatient, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am shallow, forgive me Lord. Because I am inconsistent, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am unfaithful, forgive me Lord. Because I am immoral, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am ungrateful, forgive me Lord. Because I am disobedient, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am selfish, forgive me Lord. Because I am lukewarm, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am slothful, forgive me Lord. Because I am unloving, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am uncommitted, forgive me Lord. Because I am sinful, forgive me Lord.  
Because I am loved by You, thank you Lord!

**An Act of Contrition:**

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee,  
and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven,  
and the pains of hell; but most of all because they offend Thee, my God,  
Who are all good and deserving of all my love.  
I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace,  
to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life.

<http://blog.adw.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/litany-of-reparation-and-repentance.pdf>

Using the Liturgy of the Word, we can keep our hearts and minds open to receive the greatest gift ever, Jesus our Lord and Savior. The Collect, prayed in faith, asks that no earthly undertaking hinders us as we go out to meet our Savior. May we pray this in wisdom.

Reflecting on this reading from the prophet Isaiah, we are given a vision of peace among the natural enemies. In our North country we would never place natural enemies in the same enclosure. We need to believe in universal peace and work for such.



<https://educationforjustice.org/resources/lectionary-reflections-second-sunday-advent-december-4-2016>

St. Paul wrote a very precise letter to the people of Rome. The section on which we reflect today speaks of both the Jewish people and the Gentiles. It shows us that all are one in Christ.

*Welcome one another, then,  
as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God.  
For I say that Christ became a minister of the circumcised  
to show God's truthfulness, to confirm the promises to the patriarchs,  
but so that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy*

Romans 15:7-9a.

This Liturgical Year uses the Gospel of Matthew. The first chapter of Matthew uses the genealogy of Jesus, tracing his origins from our father in faith, Abraham to the foster father of Jesus, Joseph. In this chapter we hear of Joseph being told of the pregnancy of Mary, in a dream. The second chapter of Matthew tells of the visit of the Magi when Jesus was a young child, a toddler.

Today's Gospel speaks of John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets. His manner of dressing and eating is reminiscent of the Old Testament prophet, Elijah, dressed in camel hair, with a leather belt and eating locust and wild honey. His message is similar to the Old Testament prophets: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"* (Matthew 3:2)

The four weeks of Advent first speak of end times, with the final coming of Jesus in judgment and then to the great mystery of the Incarnation, with Jesus, the Son of God, becoming human. This particular gospel reminds us of the importance of letting go of all the sin that binds us. Within the crowds that were approaching John were the Sadducees and the Pharisees, who according to John, did not bear good fruit.

To be able to hear the plea of John the Baptist we can spend some time praying with the following litany of repentance. Needless to say, none of us are guilty of everything listed here but because we are a community of faith we need to pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

### LITANY OF REPENTANCE

In reparation for sins against justice. In reparation for sins against modesty.  
In reparation for sins against purity. In reparation for sins against truth.  
In reparation for all sins against the human person.  
In reparation for sins against children and the young.  
In reparation for sins against the innocent and trusting.  
In reparation for sins against the frail and elderly.  
In reparation for sins against the unborn and infants.  
In reparation for sins against the weak and powerless.  
In reparation for sins against immigrants and strangers.  
In reparation for sins against the poor and disadvantaged.  
In reparation for sins against the sanctity of marriage.  
In reparation for sins against the sanctity of the family.  
In reparation for sins against the sanctity of the priesthood.  
In reparation for sins against the sanctity of consecrated life.  
For our failure to give witness to Christ as we ought.  
For our failure to submit our will to God.  
For our failure to give good example to others.  
For our failure to seek God above all things.  
For our failure to act justly. For our failure to show mercy.  
For our failure to repent of our sins.  
For our failure to obey the commandments of the gospel.  
For our failure to curb our earthly desires. For our failure to lead a holy life.  
For our failure to speak the truth. For our failure to stand up against injustice.  
For our failure to live chastely. For our failure to show compassion for the suffering.  
For our failure to guide sinners to repentance. For our failure to pray for others.  
For our failure to assist those in need. For our failure to console the grieving.  
For our failure to forgive others.  
For our failure to encourage those who are weak in faith.  
For our failure to endure the trials of life patiently. For our failure to visit the sick.  
For our failure to love as we ought. For our failure to practice our faith with zeal.  
For our failure to work for the unity of peoples and nations.  
For our failure to promote peace and reconciliation.  
For our failure to seek forgiveness for our sins.  
For our failure to be generous with our goods.