

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

PENITENTIAL ACT

You raise the dead to life in the Spirit:
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
You bring pardon and peace to the sinner:
Christ, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
You bring light to those in darkness:
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
May almighty God have mercy on us....Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

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.....

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING *Isaiah 40:1-5.9-11*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

'Console my people, console them,' says your God. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.' A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God.' Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes

**The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM *Ps. 84: 9-14*

R. Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.

1. I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace, peace for his people. His help is near for those who fear him and his glory will dwell in our land. [R]
2. Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced. Faithfulness shall spring from the earth and justice look down from heaven. [R]



3. The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit. Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps. [R]

SECOND READING *2 Peter 3:8-14*

A reading from the second letter of St. Peter.

There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, 'a day' can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up.

Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heavens and new earth, the place where righteousness will be at home. So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.

**The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

GOSPEL *Mark 1:1-8*

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Mark.

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight,



and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

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

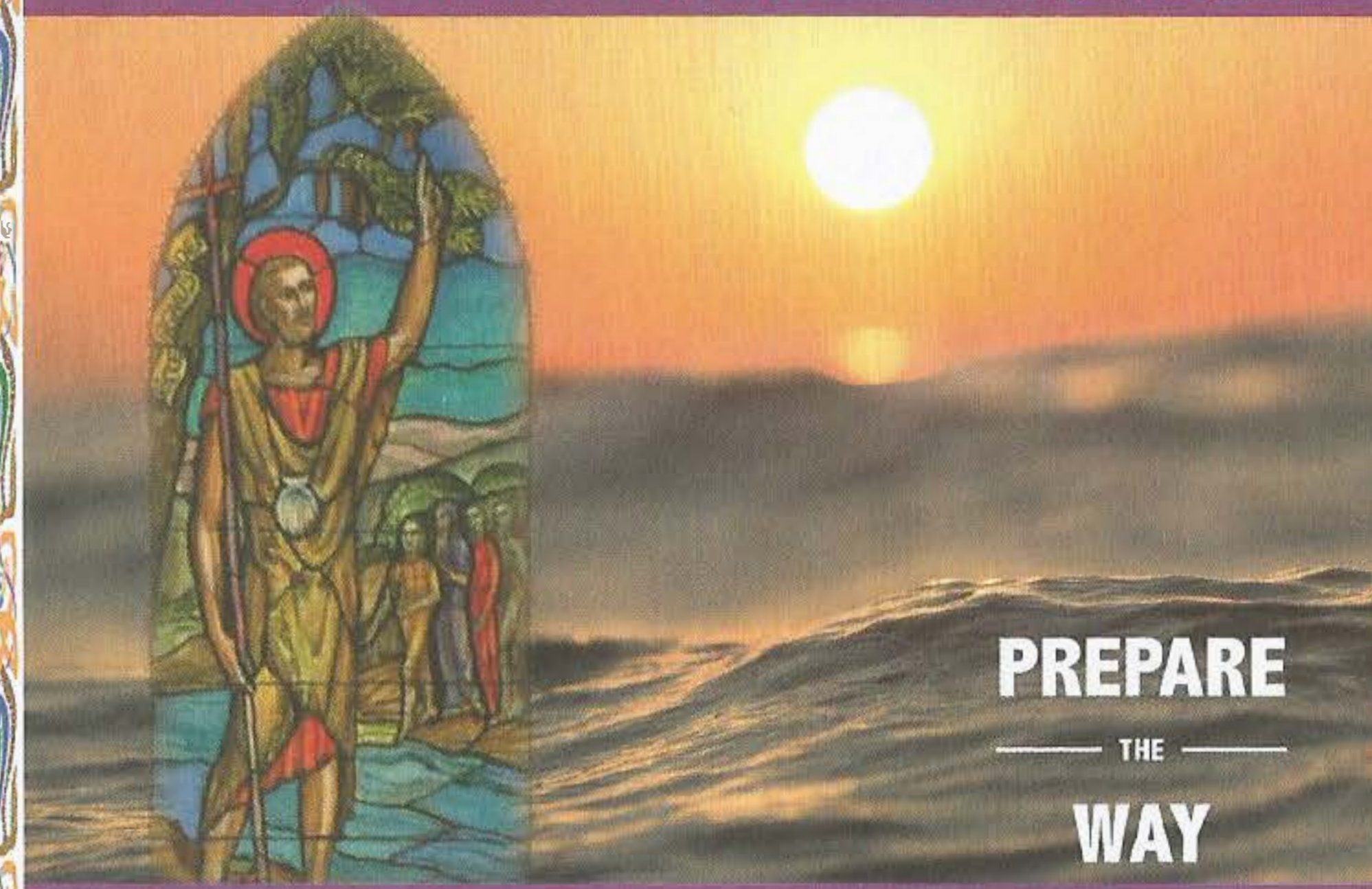
NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.



focus on sunday

The message of repentance during this season of Advent is a call to each one of us to look deeply into our lives, to renew and deepen our relationship with God.



I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

All bow for following three lines: and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Be pleased, O Lord, with our humble prayers and offerings, and, since we have no merits to plead our cause, come, we pray, to our rescue with the protection of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord.

AFTER THE CONSECRATION

The mystery of faith. We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.



The musical, *Godspell* opens with God's voice, as spoken by Jesus, declaring 'My name is known: God and King. I am most in majesty, in whom no beginning may be and no end'. John the Baptist then calls the community to order by blowing a shofar (a type of bugle). The cast sing 'Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord'. Jesus asks to be baptised, explaining that 'we too will now conform to all that God requires'. The cast sings 'Turn Back O Man', imploring us to change and turn back to God.

Angela's Ashes is in a sense an Advent wilderness for one family. Angela struggles to hold her family together as financial struggles and chronic alcoholism take their grim toll on many lives.

There is no help from her extended bigoted family. The face of the Church is brutal, apart from the sympathetic humanity of a priest who listens to the faltering words of Frank. In the film version the sight of Frank praying as he kneels before the statue of Saint Francis of Assisi gives us a glimpse of hope.

'Console my people, console them' are the words that 'speak to the heart' in today's First Reading. Angela is the true image of the shepherd holding the lambs of her family close to her breast. This is the line quoted at the beginning of Mark's Gospel today. The prophetic words of the Old Testament are the beginning of the New Testament! Who consoles you? Who do you console? Who shepherds you as your life ebbs and flows between desolation and consolation?

Fr John Cullen, Parish Priest Anascraigh Co Galway and Editor, *Intercom*. From Fr Cullen's *Alert, Aware, Attentive: Advent Reflections*, available from www.messenger.ie/books, €4.95.