

**St. Ignatius of Loyola Church  
Pre-K-5 Family-Based Program**

**December 6th - Second Sunday of Advent**

**Reflection Point:** As John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, Baptism sends us to prepare the way of the Lord. The gift of the Holy Spirit leads us to continually renew our lives so that we might lead others to Jesus.

**Reading:** Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

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."

**Reflecting Together:**

1. What did John the Baptist do to prepare the way for Jesus?
2. Having heard today's Gospel, is there anything else that you think that we should be doing during Advent to prepare the way for Jesus?

**Going Deeper:**

1. What are some things we can change in our lives to better follow Jesus?
2. Who are some people in your life who are role models of Christian discipleship (who teach you how to follow Jesus with their actions? How do they do this?)

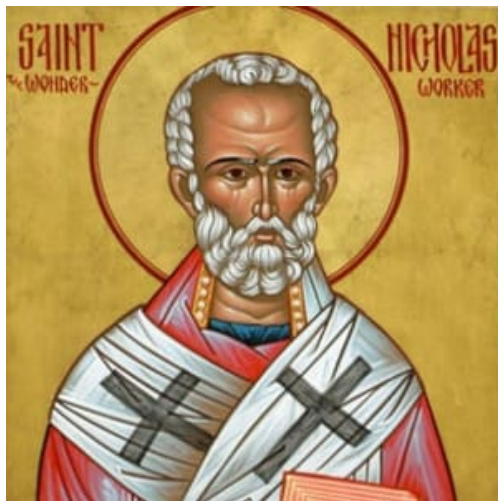
## *Finding God in Our Week*

The season of Advent invites us to renew our lives in preparation for the coming of Jesus. The people who heard the message of John the Baptist repented for their sins and were baptized as a sign of God's forgiveness. In Baptism, our sins are forgiven, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, who helps us in our life of discipleship. Led by the Holy Spirit, we use this Advent season to renew our lives so that we, like John the Baptist, might prepare the way for Jesus. During Advent, we ask God to forgive our sins and look for ways that we can be better followers of Jesus. When we do these things, we become like John the Baptist and invite others to follow Jesus. *Let's all choose one thing that we will do this week to change our lives so that we are better followers of Jesus.*

## *At Home*

As you gather together as a family, talk about ways in which the example of others has called you to be a follower of Jesus. Name the people who have been examples to you of Christian discipleship and describe their characteristics that you have tried to emulate. As a family, identify at least one action that you will take this week to try to be more faithful followers of Jesus. Conclude in prayer together that God will receive this action and use it to lead others to Jesus. Pray the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

## *An Example of Lived Faith: St. Nicholas*



December 6 is Saint Nicholas Day, or the Feast of Saint Nicholas. It is a Christian Festival celebrated every December in honor of Saint Nicholas, a saint revered for his extreme generosity to children! St. Nicholas, was born a very long time ago during the third century in the village of Patara in Asia Minor. His wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships. Bishop Nicholas suffered persecution for his faith, and was even exiled and imprisoned for being Christian. After his release, Nicholas attended the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 (this Council developed the Nicene Creed that we say in Mass still today!). The anniversary of his death (December 6, AD 343) became a day of celebration. How do you think St. Nicholas helped to prepare the way of the Lord through his actions?