

## POPE FRANCIS' STORY



### ADVENT WAITING

*Pope Francis says that wasn't always the kind and gentle man that he is now. All through his life, he has been constantly changing, trying to follow Jesus Christ more fully, and learning to be more like his Master, becoming kinder, more gentle. He preaches constantly about the love and mercy of God because this has changed his own life. Pope Francis wants us to come to know the God of Mercy as he does. He wants us to help the poor because when we meet the poor, we meet Jesus.*

*On our life journey, we are waiting for God. What are we learning about God as we walk through life? What are we learning about ourselves? What are we learning about service to the poor?*

### WHAT ABOUT YOU? *A conversation starter for families*

Pope Francis is a voice crying out in the wilderness, calling us to love God by loving our neighbour. Who else do you know who is helping us to see the needs of the poor, the homeless, the lonely? What can you do, here at home, to make the path straight for someone else today?

IN ADVENT, WE WAIT IN HOPE.

WE WORK IN HOPE FOR THE COMING OF THE REIGN OF GOD.

WE WILL KNOW THAT THE REIGN OF GOD IS HERE BY THESE SIGNS—  
THE BLIND SEE, THE DEAF HEAR AND THE POOR HAVE GOOD NEWS  
PROCLAIMED TO THEM!

### 'My people are poor and I am one of them'.

Jorge Mario Bergoglio was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Today, as the 266th and the current Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis is known the world over for his great humility and approachability. Ordained as Pope at the age of 76 on March 13, 2013, Pope Francis is the first citizen from the Americas, the first non-European and first Jesuit priest to be named Pope.

Before taking up his new ministry, he served as the Archbishop and Cardinal of Buenos Aires. Ever since his ordination to the priesthood, Pope Francis has continuously and tirelessly worked for the well-being of the poor, which he claims to be his foremost concern. Furthermore, he is committed to bridge the gap between people of various backgrounds, class, beliefs and faith through peaceful talks.

Pope Francis has chosen an informal approach to his office since the Papal elections. He has declined most luxuries offered to a Pope and instead prefers to live a simple and humble lifestyle. A few examples of the same include his decision to live at the Vatican guesthouse rather than the papal residence, choosing a simple car (a Ford Focus) rather than flashy vehicles, wearing a simple white cassock instead of the red mozzetta and an iron pectoral cross instead of the gold one on his first appearance as a pontiff.

Pope Francis strongly supports and considers social outreach to be the essential work of the church. He proclaims the mercy and love of God wherever he goes, and his smile and warmth have encouraged many people to embrace their faith with enthusiasm and joy.

Pope Francis cries out "Prepare the way of the Lord! Make His paths straight!"



## LIVING FAITH A FAMILY RESOURCE

### 2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

#### GOD'S WORD FOR TODAY

LUKE 3: 1-6 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight.

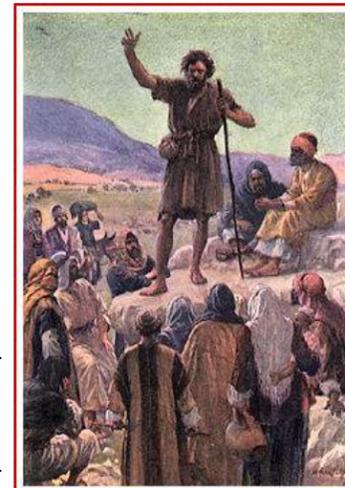
Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;

and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' '

**Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight!**



### A REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL

"Prepare the way of the Lord!" With these words we meet John the Baptist. John prepares the way for Jesus. He prepares peoples' hearts to be open to Jesus' mission of love, mercy and reconciliation. He prepares peoples' spirits to hear Jesus' words of hope and consolation, challenge and call. In this Gospel passage, John tells us something very important about God. God makes crooked paths straight. God fills in the valleys and lowers the mountains. God makes rough roads smooth. You and I are made in the image and likeness of God. We are called to do these things, too. We are called to make the path through life easier for our brothers and sisters, especially those who suffer, or who are disadvantaged. Look around you this week. How can you be John the Baptist in your home, school or community? How can you proclaim by your example and the way you live that Jesus is among us?



## A FAMILY ACTIVITY

### A CHRISTMAS CAKE TO GIVE AWAY



If your family has a traditional fruit cake recipe, why not make two! One for you, and one to share with a neighbour, a sick friend, a local shelter...

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 45 minutes

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1/8 cup chopped dried cherries
- 1/8 cup chopped dried mango
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup dried currants
- 2 tablespoons chopped candied lemon
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/8 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans

Original recipe makes 1 6-inch round pan

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Soak cherries, mango, cranberries, currants, and citron in 1/4 cup rum for at least 24 hours. Cover tightly, and store at room temperature.
2. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Butter a 6x3-inch round pan or loaf pan and line it with parchment paper.
3. In a large bowl, cream together butter and brown sugar until fluffy. Beat in egg. Whisk together flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon; mix into butter and sugar in three batches, alternating with molasses and milk. Stir in soaked fruit and chopped nuts. Scrape batter into prepared pan.
4. Bake in preheated oven for 40 to 45 minutes. Cool in the pan for ten minutes, then turn out on rack.



#### IDEAS FOR FAMILIES THIS WEEK...

- Shop for a gift to put under the Tree of Joy (or another charity).
- Visit an elderly home and hand out homemade cookies.
- Take a few small gifts to a shelter for women and children.
- Write a letter to a family friend or some troops stationed overseas.
- Drive to a store that has a Salvation Army bell ringer just to donate (without going into the store to buy anything!).
- Buy a small gift for a child in the long-term care wing of the children's ward, and bring a bouquet of flowers for his/her mother.
- Serve a meal together as a family at a local homeless shelter.
- Raid the pantry for canned goods to donate to a charity.
- Take a plate of cookies and a homemade Christmas card to your doctor's office, library, church office, and/or dentist office.
- Anonymously pay for the Santa photos of the person behind you in line at the mall.
- Wear Santa hats and take some doggie treats to your local shelter.
- If you go to the woods to chop a Christmas tree, buy an extra license and bring one home for a neighbor who may not have the resources to get their own.
- Wear Santa hats and take a garbage bag to clean up garbage from your neighborhood.
- Clean out your toy boxes and donate good quality items to an opportunity store.

## THE CHURCH PRAYS IN ADVENT

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

## OUR CHURCH TEACHES THE CHURCH EXISTS IN ORDER TO EVANGELIZE

"We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church." It is a task and mission which the vast and profound changes of present-day society make all the more urgent. **Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize**, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection. *Evangelization in the Modern World*, an Encyclical of Pope Paul VI, 1975

