

second SUNDAY OF ADVENT

■ LIGHT THE ADVENT WREATH

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ... Come Lord Jesus, be our light! Fill our hearts, families, communities and the world with peace as we continue our Advent journey.

■ READ THE GOSPEL for the Second Sunday of Advent (Cycle B) Mark 1:1-8

“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.”



Photo courtesy of Ten Thousand Villages

■ REFLECT WITH A STORY

In the Holy Land, where ongoing conflict has cost countless lives, women are often messengers of peace and reconciliation. Usually, Israelis and Palestinians live in separate communities and do not talk to each other. But Michal Zilberberg, an Israeli, and Insaf Arabi, a Palestinian, are two women who are changing that. Both women needed to earn money to support their families. When they heard about a basket-weaving class offered by Sindyanna of Galilee, where they knew both Israelis and Palestinians would be present, they signed up.

Michal was uncomfortable when she first attended class because she could not speak Arabic. But a Palestinian woman reached out to her, trying to learn some Hebrew so that they could talk. “I taught her some words in Hebrew and she taught me,” Michal said.

Insaf has also become friends with Israeli women in the class. “We have this idea that they are so different from us. I now know that they are not so different,” Insaf said. “They are like us.”

In this class, where Israeli and Palestinian women communicate openly, they’re learning what they have in common and being messengers of reconciliation in their communities. At Sindyanna, “now we are all friends,” Insaf added. “Our families are friends and we even go to each other’s homes to visit.”

PRAY

Prince of Peace, help us to be messengers of reconciliation to prepare the way for Jesus as John the Baptist did. Show us small ways to build peace in our family, community, and world. Amen

REFLECT

Is there anyone in your community who has been excluded? How can you reach out to them and make them feel included?

ACT

Attend a parish reconciliation service with your family and reflect on the Lord’s mercy and forgiveness in your life.

GIVE

Support groups like Sindyanna that help people work together toward reconciliation by purchasing ethically produced crafts. Visit crsfairtrade.org.