



2nd Sunday of Advent
10th December 2023.

Hope you are enjoying the new year!

Last Sunday the Church celebrated Advent Sunday and the start of the new year. During these few weeks we prepare for Christmas and also remember Christ's second coming. The message is KEEP WATCH. KEEP AWAKE.

In our Gospel readings on Sundays we'll be rediscovering the life of St. John the Baptist; The fore-runner of Christ. Sent to prepare the way for Christ, 'to make his path straight'. In St. Mark's Gospel, which we'll be following this year, there is no mention of John's childhood. We meet him for the first time in the wilderness, proclaiming a 'baptism of repentance'. His preaching was popular and many followed him. St Luke, in the first chapter of his gospel tells the wonderful story of John's conception, birth and early life.

This beautiful cartoon or drawing by Leonardo da Vinci ((1452-1519) shows a happy family group of three generations. Mary sits on her mother's knee, holding the infant Christ who in turn blesses the toddler John the Baptist. Mother looks at daughter, daughter looks at Son, baby and toddler regard each other – loving meaningful glances.

In my very early art teaching days the cartoon was restored and rehung in a side room at the National Gallery. It was considered the work to see that year. We queued, not for too long. Then shuffled into this special side room where the cartoon was displayed in subdued lighting. No talking, just looking, then shuffled on. Very special, reverential almost !