

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Ready Ourselves

God of justice and peace,
you promise us fullness of life and a share in
your kingdom.

We strive to live according to your Word,
but too often our hearts are dulled by the
anxieties of daily life
and the temptations we encounter.

In this season of Advent,
we join with our ancestors in faith,
Abraham, David, and Ruth,
awaiting the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Keep us vigilant to his Word and teach us the
path of righteousness.

Help us endure times of trial and fill us with
the joy of your Holy Spirit.

Grant us an increase in love for one another
and guide our actions so that we may grow
in holiness.

Rouse our hearts from sleep and dampen
our anxieties,
so that we might ready ourselves to welcome
Jesus, when he comes again in glory.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, November 29, 2015

Stay Alert



Today's Readings: Jeremiah 33:14–16; Psalm 25:4–5, 8–9, 10, 14; 1 Thessalonians 3:12—4:2; Luke 21:25–28, 34–36. As we begin this season of hope and expectation, you might want to take a moment to think about the past year. What paths did you take and where did they lead you? In what ways were you a sign of God's love to your family, parish community, or coworkers?

Even though Advent is a relatively short liturgical season, it is a rich time. It calls us to reflect more profoundly on the mystery of Christ's coming first as a child and then at the end of time. The Church gives us this season as a moment to pause and reflect on our life in Christ. She asks us to evaluate our lives and ready our hearts for the coming of Christ.

This is no easy task. Often we are distracted, drowsy, and anxious and so we lose sight of Christ.

The readings this Sunday clearly set the stage for our Advent journey and quickly immerse us into the hard questions. Each reading challenges us to consider God's promise to save us from death and establish a reign of peace. In the Gospel, Jesus provides a disturbing description of the world on that final day. Yet, he tells us to stand tall with our heads raised and warns us to be vigilant and to pray for endurance. Do you ever consider your readiness for the coming of the Messiah? If you have fallen in love with Christ, does your life proclaim that to all the earth? Stay alert this season and let Christ guide your heart on the right path.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, November 30, 2015 Feast of St. Andrew, Apostle

The Gospel narratives say little about Andrew, but tradition tells us he evangelized Greece and Turkey and was crucified. The theme of today's Gospel is summed up in the phrase "Follow me." Andrew and Peter risked everything to follow Christ. Jesus invites us every day to follow him and to give witness to his love and mercy. During Advent, take time each day to reflect on your life in Christ. Jesus has called you. How do you respond to his invitation? *Today's Readings:* Romans 10:9–18; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11; Matthew 4:18–22.

Tuesday, December 1, 2015 Justice Shall Flourish

During the season of Advent, we reflect on the coming of the Messiah not only as a child, but also at the end of time. Today's passage from Isaiah and the psalm describe a world where justice will flourish. All violence and war will cease, and peace will have dominion over all the earth. What a wonderful picture! This week, pray for the peace of Christ to infuse the hearts of rulers, homes, and institutions. You might also consider making a Jesse Tree with your children and discussing the First Reading. *Today's Readings:* Isaiah 11:1–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 12–13, 17; Luke 10:21–24.

Wednesday, December 2, 2015 Abundance

Like the Gospel, the First Reading depicts a scene of God's abundance and care for us. Jesus saves us from sin and death so that we can share at the eternal feast. In the Gospel, Jesus cures those brought to him, then broke bread with them, so that they would not go hungry. This act is a sign of God's love, and of the abundance we will share on that final day as followers of Christ. This week, share a feast with someone and give thanks for God's mercy. *Today's Readings:* Isaiah 25:6–10a; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; Matthew 15:29–37.

Thursday, December 3, 2015 Memorial of St. Francis Xavier, Priest

The three readings proclaimed today highlight that the just will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. In this season, we are asked to ready ourselves and evaluate where our heart is. Is it ready to receive Christ? Do you listen to God's word, and are you moved to act with kindness? Jesus says that those who listen and follow his ways will be like a house built on rock. Because of their steady faith, these people will rejoice as they enter the kingdom. Choose a verse or two of Psalm 118 and sit quietly with it and allow it to penetrate you. *Today's Readings:* Isaiah 26:1–6; Psalm 118:1 and 8–9, 19–21, 25–27a; Matthew 7:21, 24–27.

Friday, December 4, 2015 Light and Healing

I love the refrain for today's Responsorial Psalm, "The Lord is my light and my salvation." Like the blind men in the Gospel, Jesus, the Light, heals and guides us. In faith, we firmly follow Christ, and by sharing in his life, we are saved from our blindness. As you pray today, ask God to heal your blindness so you can see the light of his glory and stand in awe of God's might. Consider using the psalm response as a mantra for your prayer throughout the day. *Today's Readings:* Isaiah 29:17–24; Psalm 27:1, 4, 13–14; Matthew 9:27–31.

Saturday, December 5, 2015 Discipleship

In today's Gospel, Jesus, who has been teaching and curing disease, commissions the twelve disciples to go forth and minister to the lost sheep of Israel. He instructs them to announce that the Reign of God is at hand. You too are a disciple of Christ. We are partners in ministry with Jesus. In what ways are you announcing the Reign of God and gathering the lost sheep? *Today's Readings:* Isaiah 30:19–21, 23–26; Psalm 147:1–2, 3–4, 5–6; Matthew 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6–8.

