

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Peace and Tranquility

God our Father and giver of peace,
you turn the forces of death
into healing,
as you fulfill your promises
throughout time.

Encourage us to be alert for
your presence
and to hope when we are discouraged.
Turn our swords, our wrongdoing,
into instruments of peace
so that one day we will rejoice
as we walk to the house of the Lord.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, November 27, 2022
A Pilgrimage toward God



Today's readings: Isaiah 2:1–5; Psalm 122:1–9; Romans 13:11–14; Matthew 24:37–44. In the time of Isaiah's prophecy, the mountaintops were considered the gods' dwelling. Is it any wonder that peace, well-being, and complete joy were to be found, according to Isaiah in the first reading, on the "mountaintop" of the new Jerusalem? As Christians, we are called to new life, to new ways of being. We are to discard enmity and act peacefully as we walk in the light to the house of the Lord.

St. Paul discerns between the darkness of the current time and the light that awaits us on "the day at hand." He calls the Romans to be ready for the Lord, to reform their lives "to put on the Lord Jesus Christ." The call is for

us also so that we will "awake from sleep" and "put on the armor of light."

Advent begins with a vivid reminder to be ready at all times to meet God. "Therefore, stay awake," Jesus tells the disciples in Matthew's Gospel account. Each day we must listen carefully to the message of Scripture. Our destination is the heavenly mountaintop, and our hope is for peace and justice for all.

As the Advent wreath is blessed and lighted on this Sunday that begins the liturgical year, keep within you the image of the burning flame. Allow the candle to reflect God's presence within each pilgrim that you encounter on your Advent journey.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, November 28

Judgment and Glory

Take to heart the words of the prophecy of Isaiah that “the LORD’s glory will be shelter and protection: / shade from the parching heat of day / refuge and cover from storm and rain.” This week, seek out the Lord when facing struggles; know that refuge awaits. Allow the consolation you receive to fill your heart with rejoicing, as the psalmist sings. *Today’s readings: Isaiah 4:2–6; Psalm 122:1–2, 3–4b, 4cd–5, 6–7, 8–9; Matthew 8:5–11.*

Tuesday, November 29

Welcome the Lamb

Isaiah invites us to come together on God’s holy mountain, where “he shall judge the poor with justice, / and decide aright for the land’s afflicted.” With justice prevailing, “there shall be no harm or ruin” on this holy mountain. Consider how you can strive to be just within your thoughts and your heart as well as your acts. Be assured that peace comes through justice. *Today’s readings: Isaiah 11:1–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 12–13, 17; Luke 10:21–24.*

Wednesday, November 30

St. Andrew, Apostle

St. Andrew the apostle was the brother of St. Peter, according to Luke 6:14. It was Andrew who told Jesus about the boy who had the loaves and fish (John 6:8–9) during the feeding of the multitudes. Ask St. Andrew today to help you find an opportunity to feed the hungry. Remember that hunger is in mind as well as in body: those who hunger for friendship, acceptance, or love need to be served as much as those who hunger for their daily food. *Today’s readings: Romans 10:9–18; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11; Matthew 4:18–22.*

Thursday, December 1

Hope and Trust

In the Gospel reading from Matthew today, Jesus is direct when he tells the disciples that “only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” will enter the kingdom. God does not desire lip service but obedience to his will. Use this Advent morning to quietly spend time with God so that you can listen to him and discern his will. Make a simple Advent wreath, light a candle each night, and pray in its light. *Today’s readings: Isaiah 26:1–6; Psalm 118:1, 8–9, 19–21, 25–27a; Matthew 7:21, 24–27.*

Friday, December 2

The Blind See

Isaiah vividly portrays the day when justice comes, saying, “On that day the deaf shall hear / the words of a book; / And out of gloom and darkness, / the eyes of the blind shall see.” This will be a time when people keep holy the name of God, and those who err will find understanding. But already in the Gospel, Jesus opens the eyes of two blind men because of their faith. During Advent, may we seek to realize that the Lord is our light and salvation, as the psalm’s refrain states. *Today’s readings: Isaiah 29:17–24; Psalm 27:1, 4, 13–14; Matthew 9:27–31.*

Saturday, December 3

St. Francis Xavier

St. Francis Xavier, a cofounder of the Jesuit order, shared his faith as a missionary. He was possibly the most instrumental missionary priest of his time because he initiated a practice of adapting to the language and customs of the people whom he wanted to baptize. This approach of adaptation has been modeled over the past five hundred years. Consider how you might adapt to the language and custom of someone who needs to be understood, accepted, and treated as a brother or sister in Christ. *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.*

