



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2016 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Welcome new horizons

Rise and shine! It can be hard as we move through life to recognize that every moment offers us a chance for a new beginning. As Paul writes to the Romans, “It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.” As Advent begins, a new liturgical year is upon us. Today is the beginning of something new. We have the chance to begin this New Year wide awake to the world around us. Open your eyes and let Christ’s Light stream in!

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44* (1). “You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Stretch your heart and mind

On the spiritual journey, it can be easy to think that you can figure everything out, that your mind is the only tool you need. On the journey of life, though, you have to engage the heart. Any other way is, according to contemplative author Cynthia Bourgeault, “like trying to play a violin with a saw.” Faith stretches far beyond what our minds can comprehend. As you begin this Advent, how might you trust in the glory of God that is coming? May your heart and mind be stretched by the answer that you find!

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 4:2-6; Matthew 8:5-11* (175). “For over all, the Lord’s glory will be shelter and protection.”

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 ADVENT WEEKDAY

Keep your Christmas presence under wraps

This Advent, try experiencing Christmas in a more gradual way. Instead of jumping into Christmas the day after Thanksgiving, allow the symbols, rich colors, poetry, and music of Advent to wash over you slowly during these weeks. Take time to contemplate the pillars of Advent: Isaiah stoking humanity’s longing for the Redeemer, Mary bringing Jesus into history, and John the Baptist urging us to begin a new life. Maybe even put up your Christmas tree later than usual, closer to Christmas Eve. If you experience “the holidays” as an exhausting trial, let Advent calm you. Let its mystery refocus your life and make you hungry for God.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24* (176). “From His roots a bud shall blossom.”

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30 FEAST OF ANDREW, APOSTLE

Raise up the cross

Tradition says that Saint Andrew died crucified on an “X” shaped cross. Saint Andrew’s Cross is best-known for its depiction on the Scottish flag. According to legend, while praying on the eve of battle, King Óengus II promised that if victory was granted, he would name Saint Andrew as the patron saint of Scotland, which is why he is honored on the flag. Pray that Saint Andrew intercedes for victory in our daily struggles.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Romans 10:9-18; Matthew 4:18-22* (684). “As he went from there, he saw ... James son of Zebedee and his brother John ... and he called them.”

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1 ADVENT WEEKDAY

Pray for a “Day without AIDS”

Since 1988, December 1 has been recognized as World AIDS Day. The following year, the first “Day without Art” was organized. More than 800 arts organizations, museums, and galleries throughout the United States covered works of art and instead displayed information about HIV. Globally there are an estimated 34 million people who have the HIV virus. Since 1984, more than 35 million people have died of HIV or AIDS. Let’s remember all those with AIDS-related illnesses, past and present. Let’s pray for them and for those who work tirelessly to care for them and to find a cure.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 26:1-6; Matthew 7:21, 24-27* (178). “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.”

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2 ADVENT WEEKDAY

Time to be truly free, at last

Legalized slavery was abolished by the end of the 19th century, but sadly it still flourishes underground. Today is the annual commemoration of the United Nations’ International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Every year, thousands of poor and defenseless men, women, and children fall into the hands of human traffickers who expose them to sexual exploitation, forced labor, warfare, and even removal of vital organs. Jesus came to set us free; let’s do our part to see that the world hears that message loud and clear by working to [protect victims of human trafficking](#).

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 29:17-24; Matthew 9:27-31* (179). “Let it be done for you according to your faith.”

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3 MEMORIAL OF FRANCIS XAVIER, PRIEST

Strong beyond their numbers

Saint Francis Xavier was a seasoned missionary who traveled to India, China, and other places in Asia. He is the first Christian missionary to go to Japan. He wrote that the Japanese were the “best people yet discovered.” He found them kind and polite, yet the work of evangelization was difficult in Japan. When Saint Francis left two years later, Japan had some 2,000 new Christians. Today the number of Catholics in Japan is still small, representing less than 0.5 percent of the population. Let’s remember them today and remember Catholics in all in those places where they represent a small minority.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8* (180). “As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’”



Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time.

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