

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Path of Light

Lord of our eternal day,
you alone brighten our world.
Sometimes we lose our way in the darkness,
and sometimes we make the world a
darker place.
Alert us to the ways we drift into shadow.
Illuminate our hearts
and send forth your instruction,

that we may follow your path of light
and ascend your holy mountain.
When darkness surrounds us, keep us
radiant with hope,
so that all will see and know that you are
in our midst,
you who alone are God.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 1, 2019
The Day Is Coming



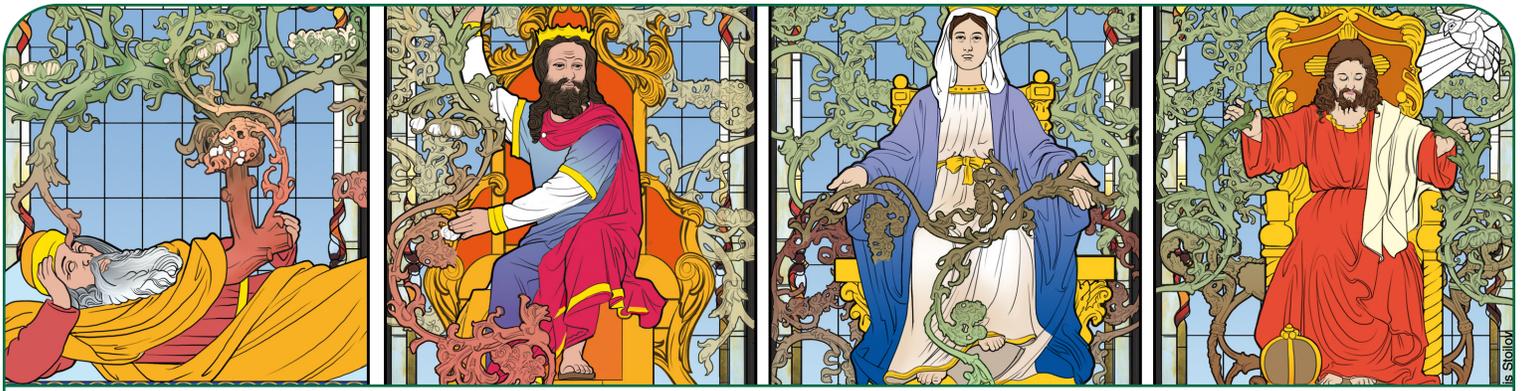
Today's Readings: Isaiah 2:1–5; Psalm 122:1–2, 3–4, 4–5, 6–7, 8–9; Romans 13:11–14; Matthew 24:37–44. Our liturgical year both concludes and begins with readings on the end-times. As we enter the season of Advent, we are reminded that we are not only preparing to celebrate Christ's birth, we are also preparing for his return. The First Reading fills us with hope for the Second Coming, for on that day everyone in the world will turn to God and there will be an end to conflicts and war.

Until Christ comes again, we must “walk in the light” and turn away from dark, destructive thoughts and deeds. When we live as holy, kind, and loving people, we show that we are ready for God's kingdom, even though we continue doing everyday things such as working, eating, and sleeping.

Our lives may not seem radically different from the lives of others, but God can tell the difference.

Jesus warns us of the danger of not getting ready. Disaster struck those who did not prepare for the flood. Disaster struck the master of the house who slept through the swift and sudden arrival—and departure—of the thief. Disaster struck those who were left behind; they were excluded from God's kingdom.

Today we light the first candle of our Advent wreaths. Before you do, sit in darkness. Name whatever evils confront you as you prepare for Christ's return. Then light the candle, and pray for God to expel darkness from you and our world. Rejoice that Christ has already come to lead you into the light of his eternal day.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 2 Far and Wide

The soldier is certain that Jesus can heal his servant, even from a distance. He sees that Jesus is the presence of God, sheltering and protecting people. In Jesus, God's holy presence spreads out beyond Jerusalem to wherever Jesus goes, to whoever asks for his help. Use a map to find places in the world that are the farthest from you and pray for the people there. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 4:2–6; Psalm 122:1–2, 3–4b, 4cd–5, 6–7, 8–9; Matthew 8:5–11.*

Tuesday, December 3 St. Francis Xavier

Jesus is the one on whom the Spirit rests, bringing the peace for which people yearn. St. Francis Xavier, recognizing that he was blessed to know the one filled with this Spirit, devoted his life to sharing the Gospel. Although thousands of people came to know God through the revelation of his Son, not everyone welcomed this missionary. But he persisted. Persevere in the Spirit of peace today by letting go of a mean or angry thought. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 11:1–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 12–13, 17; Luke 10:21–24.*

Wednesday, December 4 Food for Life

Every day in our world some people have more than they can eat while others go hungry. God promises a world in which everyone has enough to eat and there are no more tears of hunger, no more pleas for help. By healing and feeding all who come to him desperate for physical and spiritual aid, Jesus fulfills God's promise. This ministry did not end with Jesus. It continues with the next generation of followers: us. Volunteer for a meal program that helps the local poor to share the good news that God is fulfilling his promises. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 25:6–10a; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; Matthew 15:29–37.*

Thursday, December 5 Built to Last

Sometimes we think we're doing what our Lord wants, when we're doing what we want. By becoming human, God surprised everyone and revealed how much about the divine we have to learn. We must listen closely to the words of God's Son and not imagine that we know best. Only when we truly know what our Lord is calling us to do will we be like "a strong city" and a house built on rock. Read chapters 5 through 7 of Matthew's account of the Gospel and reflect on the passage that most surprises and challenges 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 6 Gifts

God's name is revered by all who long for justice and who turn to him for instruction. Jesus heals the two blind men because they "see" that he leads people to such reverence for God. They're so happy to be healed that they refuse to keep the healing a secret. St. Nicholas, who is honored today, brought joy to people by secretly leaving gifts. Surprise someone with an anonymous gift. In this way, you will revere God, the source of all gifts. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 29:17–24; Psalm 27:1, 4, 13–14; Matthew 9:27–31.*

Saturday, December 7 St. Ambrose

During St. Ambrose's lifetime, many people denied that Jesus was fully divine. Yet if Jesus did not fully share in the divinity of his Father, then God hadn't become truly present to us at the Incarnation. St. Ambrose knew that the Jesus who came to "bind up the wounds of his people" perfectly and completely revealed the love of God. Share God's love today by visiting someone who might feel forgotten or alone. *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.*

