



The Catholic Community of Divine Savior

# Family Faith Focus

Volume 9, Issue 18

November 29, 2020

## Dates to Remember

- November 28: 4:00 PM Mass
- November 29: 9:00 AM Mass
- Please see our parish website for reservation information and links to view Sunday or weekday Masses online.

## Our Christian Journey

*Life is a journey—a journey to meet Jesus at the end and forever. A journey on which we do not encounter Jesus is not a Christian journey. The Christian must continually encounter Jesus, watch him and let himself be watched over by Jesus, because Jesus watches us with love. To encounter Jesus also means allowing oneself to be gazed upon by him. This is the Christian life: to walk, to go forward, united as brothers and sisters, loving one another. Encountering Jesus is important. Today, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will have greater strength for the journey, for the encounter with Jesus. Take courage, do not be afraid! Life is this journey and the most beautiful gift is to meet Jesus.*

— Pope Francis

## The First Sunday of Advent

**Mark 13: 33-37**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Be watchful! Be alert!

You do not know when the time will come.

It is like a man traveling abroad.

He leaves home and places his servants in charge, each with his own work,

and orders the gatekeeper to be on the watch.

Watch, therefore;

you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming,

whether in the evening, or at midnight,

or at cockcrow, or in the morning.

May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.

What I say to you, I say to all: ‘Watch!’”

The Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

## Sunday Gospel Connection: November 29, 2020 First Sunday of Advent, Cycle B Mark 13: 33-37

**Gospel Background:** Today we begin the season of Advent, which marks the start of a new liturgical year for the Church. The readings for Sunday Mass are arranged on a three-year cycle. Each year features a different Gospel—Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Readings from the Gospel of John are interspersed throughout all three years. With this year's first Sunday of Advent, we begin Cycle B of the Lectionary, which focuses our attention on the Gospel of Mark. This week and next week, our readings from Mark's Gospel present two important Advent themes: the Lord's return at the end of time and John the Baptist's preparation for Jesus.

Today's Gospel is taken from the end of Mark's Gospel, the chapter that immediately precedes Mark's account of Jesus' Passion. Having been questioned repeatedly by the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus is now questioned by his disciples—Peter, James, John, and Andrew—who want details about his prediction of the destruction of the Temple. Jesus answers with many warnings about the difficulties that the disciples will face.

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Today's passage comes at the conclusion of Jesus' warnings to his disciples. Jesus emphasizes the need for watchfulness. The Son of Man will come without warning; only the Father knows the exact hour. The disciples must not be caught unprepared when this time comes.



Scholars believe that Mark's Gospel was written around the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. Mark's audience consisted of Christians who were living in difficult social and political times, times of conflict. They were likely beginning to face persecution as followers of Jesus. In this difficult time, it helped to recall that Jesus had foretold of such difficulties. Early Christian communities took courage from Jesus' warning to remain alert and watchful, and they found in his words a way to persevere through suffering.

Today's Gospel reminds us that Advent is about more than our preparation for the Church's celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas. Advent is also about preparing ourselves for Christ's return in glory at the end of time. Like the disciples and the faithful in Mark's community, we must also stay alert and watchful. Our faithfulness to God, through the good times as well as the difficult times, shows us to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man.

**Family Connection:** In family life, we try to prepare ourselves for many future things: our next vacation, our children's education, our retirement. We are careful not to allow ourselves to be caught by surprise so that we can handle any challenges our family may face. Today's Gospel reminds us that we are called to be just as attentive and alert to the coming of the Son of Man so that it will not catch us unprepared. This means attending to our family's spiritual life as carefully as we attend to other important family matters.

As you gather as a family, talk about a time when you received surprise visitors at your house, perhaps a neighbor who stopped by or a relative who arrived unannounced. Was your household prepared to receive this unannounced guest? What might your family have done differently if you knew ahead of time that this visitor was going to arrive? Jesus told his disciples that no one knows when the Son of Man will return, except the Father. Read with your family what Jesus told his disciples in today's Gospel, Mark 13:33-37.

During Advent, we not only prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we also check to see if we are doing all the things that will keep us ready to receive Jesus when he comes again. Talk about how your family can recommit to daily prayer, reading Scripture, and staying faithful to God's commandments. Pray together that through this Advent season your family will be more prepared to receive Jesus when he comes again. Read as a concluding prayer Paul's words to the Corinthians found in today's second reading, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9, or pray the Lord's Prayer.

### **1 Corinthians 1: 3-9**

Brothers and sisters:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, that in him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

For more information and Sunday Connection resources visit:

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/sunday-connection/first-sunday-of-advent-cycle-b-sunday-connection/>

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# FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



## Sacred Clay

God our Father,  
you are the faithful potter.  
You never abandon the work of your hands.  
When evil shatters us,  
take us into your hands again.  
Pick up the broken pieces of our lives.  
Smooth our jagged edges.  
Seal the fractures that weaken us.

As you fashion and refashion us,  
mold us into people who are steady  
and strong.  
Fill us with your many spiritual gifts.  
Make us unbreakable vessels of holiness  
that will gleam forever in the light  
of your kingdom.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Sunday, November 29, 2020**

**Prepared by God**



*Today's Readings: Isaiah 63:16b–17, 19b; 64:2–7; Psalm 80:2–3, 15–16, 18–19; 1 Corinthians 1:3–9; Mark 13:33–37.* Initially, our First Reading may feel more suited to Lent than Advent. The prophet declares that God's people have become so sinful they are like dirty rags. They are withered, fallen leaves that are carried away by evil. The prophet also notes, however, that the people are the work of God's hands. They are God's children. He cries out for God to intervene, to rescue the people from their sin.

Only God can deliver people from evil, but we nonetheless have a role in withstanding it. The fullness of God's kingdom began with the birth of Christ, but we await its completion. As we wait for Christ's return, we, like the ser-

vants in the Gospel passage, have work to do. We must resist sin and pursue holiness with unfailing, tireless devotion. Every moment of our lives is an opportunity to show Christ that we are not only watching for his return, we are eagerly awaiting it. Our words and actions show Christ that we desire the kingdom he brings.

Our heavenly Father comes to our aid, as the ancient prophet cried out for him to do. God has given us countless spiritual gifts to resist sin and to keep us steadfast until his Son's return. As we bless our Advent wreaths today, we ask God to make them signs of his blessings upon us and reminders of the light we must bear within us until Christ vanquishes the darkness forever.



## THIS WEEK AT HOME

### Monday, November 30 St. Andrew, Apostle

In Jesus' day, the sea represented death because of the perils people faced on the water. When Jesus calls the fishermen to follow him, he says that just as they drew fish out of the sea, so will they draw people out of suffering and death. After Andrew spends time learning from his new master, he will set forth to catch people in the net of God's salvation. He will preach the good news so that others will call upon the name of the Lord. Learn more from the Lord by joining a Bible study this Advent. *Today's Readings: Romans 10:9–18; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11; Matthew 4:18–22.*

### Tuesday, December 1 God's Peace

God's kingdom comes through a Spirit-filled ruler who puts God's will above all else. As this leader purges the land of self-interest and violence, all creation becomes part of the peace he brings, and people at last understand the salvation God offers. Such salvation is received by the childlike, by those who know that only God can bring the justice and peace for which we long. Make a list of places that are especially in need of God's peace. Pray for the people who live there. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 11:1–10; Psalm 72:1–2, 7–8, 12–13, 17; Luke 10:21–24.*

### Wednesday, December 2 The Hand of the Lord

The crowds that follow Jesus are looking to him to save them. He showed God's glory as he healed them. Jesus not only heals people, he attends to other needs, too. He wipes away tears of pain and anguish. He provides food and gives people rest. As Jesus fulfills Isaiah's prophecy, the people see God's love for them. They rejoice at God's care and protection. Today extend a caring hand toward someone who is sick and suffering. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 25:6–10a; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; Matthew 15:29–37.*

### Thursday, December 3 St. Francis Xavier, Missionary

God assures us that he is our rock, our protector, the firm foundation beneath our feet. No work that we do, no undertaking, will succeed unless God supports it. Francis Xavier understood this well: he became a missionary first in India, then in Japan, where he taught people about Christ and built up new communities of faith. Pray for missionaries today, especially those who work in Asia. *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 With New Eyes

These readings tell how God banishes evil—the evil of injustice, fear, shame, ignorance, and physical impairments, like blindness. God's light and healing reach into every part of our world and every part of our lives. Too often we don't see God's saving presence. Like the blind men in the Gospel passage, we must seek God and call out to him so that we will see his presence with new eyes. How do your Advent and Christmas decorations help you see God's presence? *Today's Readings: Isaiah 29:17–24; Psalm 27:1, 4, 13–14; Matthew 9:27–31.*

### Saturday, December 5 Harvests

God promises to manifest himself to his people, to guide them, and to bind up their wounds. God will also provide so much water and food that even the animals enjoy abundant harvests. The real harvest, though, is us. God cultivates and gathers his people into his kingdom. Sketch images or jot down words and phrases from today's readings that especially move you. Bring your images and insights into a time of silent prayer. *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.*

