



The Catholic Community of Divine Savior

Family Faith Focus

Volume 10, Issue 18

November 28, 2021

Dates to Remember

- November 28: First Sunday of Advent— Mass at 4:00 PM on Saturday & 9:00 AM on Sunday
- November 30: Memorial of St. Andrew
- December 3: Memorial of St. Francis Xavier
- December 5: Second Sunday of Advent— FCFF Mass & Advent/Christmas Formation Session, 9:00 AM

Catholic Terms to Know

Advent: The first season of the Church's liturgical year, that includes the four Sundays before Christmas. The word Advent means "coming". During Advent we prepare our hearts to celebrate Christmas as we pray and focus our thoughts on the three comings of Jesus: in history at his birth in Bethlehem; at the end of the world in glory and majesty; and in his presence with us each day in Word and Sacrament.

First Sunday of Advent

Luke 21: 25-28, 34-36

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars,

and on earth nations will be in dismay, perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

People will die of fright

in anticipation of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

And then they will see the Son of Man

coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.

"Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap.

For that day will assault everyone who lives on the face of the earth.

Be vigilant at all times and pray that you have the strength

to escape the tribulations that are imminent

and to stand before the Son of Man."

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

Psalm 25

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Your ways, O LORD, make known to me; teach me your paths,

Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my savior, and for you I wait all the day.

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

Good and upright is the LORD; thus he shows sinners the way.

He guides the humble to justice, and teaches the humble his way.

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.

All the paths of the LORD are kindness and constancy toward those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

The friendship of the LORD is with those who fear him, and his covenant, for their instruction.

R. To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.



Sunday Gospel Connection: November 28, 2021

First Sunday of Advent — Cycle C

Luke 21: 25-28, 34-36

Gospel Background: Today is the first Sunday of Advent, which is also the first Sunday of the new liturgical year. The Advent season includes the four Sundays that precede Christmas. Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of the Lord. In this season, we recall two central elements of our faith: the final coming of the Lord in glory and the incarnation of the Lord in the birth of Jesus. The key themes of the Advent season are watchful waiting, preparation, and justice.

In this new liturgical year, the Gospel of Luke will be the primary Gospel proclaimed (Lectionary Cycle C). Today's Gospel is taken from the last chapter before the passion narrative in which Jesus is teaching in the Temple. We hear Jesus speak to his disciples about the need for vigilance and prayer as they wait for the coming of the Son of Man in glory. This passage marks the conclusion of a lengthy dialogue in which Jesus predicts the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, warns about the persecution and tribulations to follow, and identifies the signs that will signal the coming of the Son of Man in glory.

The community for whom Luke wrote his Gospel may have believed that they were already experiencing some of the events Jesus described. Most scholars believe that Luke's Gospel was written after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. At the time, many Christians interpreted this event as an indication that Jesus' second coming was near.

Though Jesus predicts a time of destruction and fear, Jesus indicates that others will be frightened; Jesus' disciples are not to fear, but are to stand tall. Yet Jesus does not promise deliverance from anxiety or tribulations. He encourages his disciples to pray for strength. The early Christian communities did not find consolation in the promise of a utopia, nor should we. Instead, we find in our Christian faith the means by which we witness to God's unfailing love for us in all circumstances.

Jesus' predictions about the end times may sound dire, but in the next paragraph Luke tells us that people woke early to listen to Jesus' teaching in the Temple area. In his person and in his message, those who heard Jesus found strength and consolation. Like the first Christians, we may encounter events and circumstances that could lead us to despair. Through prayer, however, we find strength and consolation in Jesus' words and in his continuing presence with us to endure all things and to witness to the action of God in our world.

Family Connection: In today's Gospel, Jesus warns his disciples against the fatigue that can emerge if one becomes consumed by the anxieties of daily life. Many families are too familiar with the kind of fatigue Jesus refers to here. We may be concerned about a family member's health, our job security, our children's education, or any number of other concerns. All these are important matters. Jesus does not promise an end to daily worries and fears, but he does teach his disciples that they will have the strength to withstand anxiety if they stay focused on him, remaining vigilant for his return and praying for strength to endure all tribulations. Through prayer, God helps us stay focused on that which is most important in our lives.

As you gather as a family, recall the tradition of making New Year's resolutions in preparation for the new calendar year. Observe that today is the first Sunday of Advent, which is the beginning of the new Church year. During the season of Advent, our Gospel readings ask us to consider what is most important to us as we prepare for Jesus' coming, at his birth and at the end of time. Read today's Gospel, Luke 21:25-28,34-36. Jesus describes signs that may disturb many people, but he says that these should not to disturb his disciples. Why? (because these signs indicate that redemption is near) What does Jesus say that his disciples should do? (Be vigilant and pray for strength.) At this start of the new Church year, consider as a family what "Advent resolutions" your family might make to help you stay focused so that you will be prepared to receive the salvation we celebrate at Jesus' birth and anticipate at Jesus' second coming. Pray together for God's help in following through on these resolutions. Pray together today's psalm, Psalm 25. (*See pg. 1*)

For more information and Sunday Connection resources visit:

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

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Watching in Hope

Loving Father,
you have revealed yourself to us
and even now you call us to you.
You call us to:
wait
watch
look for signs.

You call us to hope.
Help us to remain in you.
Help us not to lose heart.
Keep our eyes toward heaven.
Make us ready for your coming.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, November 28, 2021 Promises Fulfilled



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. Advent, the start of the liturgical year, is a season of preparation for Christ's coming. The decorations that are out already may make it appear that Christmas has arrived. But without anticipation, our celebration cannot be full. In fact, the first two weeks of the season of Advent do not focus on the birth of Jesus at all, but on our hope for his coming at the end of time.

What is it that we hope for?

When we look around, we see that the world is not as it should be. There is illness, suffering, poverty, and injustice. People die. Grief and loss are real. Too often, death comes violently, leaving a different kind of pain in its wake.

Sometimes we think that this cannot be what our loving God intended for the world.

Indeed, God promises something different. Throughout Scripture and history, we know that God is a keeper of promises. It is in those promises that we hope. Jesus and the prophets describe perfect justice, the end of suffering and pain, peace among people, a new heaven and a new earth. The world portrayed in the readings cannot come without disruption. The old must fall away. What is not of God must fall away to make way for the completely new thing that God is doing.

Is there anything that must fall away for God's light to live fully in you?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, November 29

The Advent Wreath

Set up an Advent wreath if you have not already. You will need four candles, three violet and one rose, and a base to hold them. Advent wreaths often incorporate evergreens. Decide when you will light the candles each day. At this time, the family might read the day's Gospel. Singing even the same simple song every day can create a lovely rhythm for the season. Many resources with daily Advent prayers for adults and children are available in print and online. A piece of purple fabric to place the wreath on will add to the environment. Nearby, consider placing a small statue or picture of Mary, on whom we meditate frequently during the season of Advent. *Today's readings: Isaiah 2:1–5; Psalm 122:1–2, 3–4b, 4cd–5, 6–7, 8–9; Matthew 8:5–11.*

Tuesday, November 30

St. Andrew

St. Andrew, one of Jesus' first disciples, was called while fishing in the Sea of Galilee. In today's Gospel, we hear that he and his brother, St. Peter, "immediately" left their old lives behind to follow Jesus, who called them to be "fishers of men." The Feast of St. Andrew is traditionally the first day of a beautiful devotion, the Christmas novena, a short prayer that is said fifteen times each day from this day until Christmas. *Today's readings: Romans 10:9–18; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 11; Matthew 4:18–22.*

Wednesday, December 1

Miracles

Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee when he went up on the mountain and healed many, many people from the crowds who came to him. There, he also feeds thousands of people, multiplying the loaves and the fish. Isaiah foretold that the Lord "will wipe away the tears from all faces" on the mountain, a vision of the messianic kingdom. Jesus reveals that vision when he heals bodies and then offers a feast, an

abundant celebration made from humble things. When might we experience that kind of healing and celebration? *Today's readings: Isaiah 25:6–10a; Psalm 23:1–3a, 3b–4, 5, 6; Matthew 15:29–37.*

Thursday, December 2

A Solid Foundation

What does it mean to have a solid foundation? Imagine a beautiful sandcastle on the beach, and next to it a humble stack of rocks with a wide base. If a large wave comes unexpectedly, the sandcastle is gone. A few of the rocks might be washed into the water, but much of that structure will still stand. In our lives, the waves will come. Each one of us will face difficulties, big and small. But the more we center our lives on love of God and neighbor, the better we will withstand the currents. *Today's readings: Isaiah 26:1–6; Psalm 118:1, 8–9, 19–21, 25–27a; Matthew 7:21, 24–27.*

Friday, December 3

St. Francis Xavier

St. Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary, traveled extensively in Asia, devoting most of his life and mission to spreading the Gospel. His practice of engaging with the culture and language of the people whom he served was later developed into what we call inculturation of the faith. Honor St. Francis Xavier today by supporting the Church's mission work around the world. *Today's readings: Isaiah 29:17–24; Psalm 27:1–2, 3–4, 5–6; Matthew 9:27–31.*

Saturday, December 4

Advent Music

Make a playlist of music that is focused on preparation with Advent songs found online. Consider more meditative instrumental music for the playlist as well. Listening to this music in the car or while making dinner can balance the excitement and bustle of December. As much joy as we have for the coming of Christ, we still wait in hope for something more, and music can help us be present to that reality. *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.*

