

Sunday, December 3, 2023

First Sunday of Advent

Readings of the Day

- Isaiah 63.16b-17: 64.1, 3-8
- Psalm 80
- 1 Corinthians 1.3-9
- Mark 13.33-37

Stay Awake!

Be Alert!

Reflection

- BE ALERT, BE ALERT, so that you will be able to recognize Your Lord in your husband, your wife, your children, your friends, your teachers, but also in all that you read in the daily news. The Lord is coming, always coming. Be alert to His coming. When you have ears to hear and eyes to see, you will recognize Him at any moment of your life. Life is Advent; life is recognizing the coming of the Lord... Still, I keep making my mistakes. I went to *The Stuntman*, a movie about the making of a film. The movie was so filled with images of greed and lust, manipulation and exploitation, fearful and painful sensations, that it filled all the empty spaces that could have been Blessed by the Spirit of Advent.... Why do we keep missing the most obvious signs of God's coming and allow our hearts to be filled with all those things that keep suggesting, not that the Lord is coming, but that nothing will happen unless we make it happen?

I hope and pray that Advent will not be filled with stuntmen, but with the Spirit of Him who invites us to listen carefully to the sounds of the New Earth that are manifesting themselves in the midst of the old.

Henri. M. Nouwen, A Latin American Journal

Prayer

- *Good and gracious God, You know how much clutter fills my mind and heart these days. Help me to pay attention to Your presence in my life. Help me to look for and find opportunities this Advent to become more aware of how much You touch my life each day. May I become ever more a sign of Your love in the world. Amen*

Advent

Monday, December 4, 2023

Monday of the First Week of Advent

- **Readings of the day**
 - Isaiah 2:1-5
 - Psalm 122
 - Matthew 8:5-11, 13
- **Reflection**



How striking is the trust of the centurion, a pagan, that Jesus will heal his servant! How do I rate myself in terms of my faith? What strengthens it and what dissipates it? Recall a time in your life when your faith in the Lord was severely tested.

Recall with Jesus the things in His life on earth, and from your own life experiences, which help you continue to believe in Jesus and in His dreams for you and all people.

<https://www.sacredspace.ie/content/matthew-85-11>

- **Prayer**

O Divine Physician, you hear the cries of all who call to You. In these dark days of Advent, may we recognize our need for Your healing love. May we trust that Your Words bring life.

Tuesday, December 5, 2023

Tuesday of the First Week of Advent

- **Readings of the Day**
 - Isaiah 11.1-10
 - Psalm 72
 - Luke 10.21-24
- **Reflection**



We must develop a global spirituality in which the demands of the gospel guide not only the behavior of individuals but of nations as well. Many will consider this naive. They are glad to accept the teachings of Jesus for their personal and family lives, but when it comes to international affairs, they consider these same teachings unrealistic and utopian. Yet, Jesus sent out His apostles to make disciples not just of individual people but of all the nations, and to teach these nations to observe His commands. At the last day, Jesus will call these same nations before his throne and raise the critical question: “What have you done for the least of mine?” The life of discipleship goes far beyond individual piety or communal loyalty. The whole world is to be converted! Nations, not just individual people, are called to leave the house of fear - where suspicion, hatred, and war rule - and enter the House of love, where reconciliation, healing, and peace can reign.

Lifesigns, Henri J. M. Nouwen

- **Prayer**

Dear God of mercy, God of light, light up my life today and teach me to be Your light in the world. AMEN

- **Readings of the Day**

- Isaiah 25.6-10a
- Psalm 23
- Matthew 15. 29-37

- **Reflection**

What about Santa Clause? Today is the Feast Day of St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas was bishop of Myra in Lycia (now Turkey), Famous for his charity, he became the focus of popular cults and devotions in the early Middle Ages. He was so popular that he was chosen joint patron of Russia with St. Andrew; he is also patron of sailors and children. In many parts of the world, he still plays a role as Santa Claus.

One story tells of a poor man with three daughters. In those days a young woman's father had to offer prospective husbands something of value—a dowry. The larger the dowry, the better the chance that a young woman would find a good husband. Without a dowry, a woman was unlikely to marry. This poor man's daughters, without dowries, were therefore destined to be sold into slavery. Mysteriously, on three different occasions, a bag of gold appeared in their home-providing the needed dowries. The bags of gold, tossed through an open window, are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left before the fire to dry. This led to the custom of children hanging stockings or putting out shoes, eagerly awaiting gifts from Saint Nicholas. Sometimes the story is told with gold balls instead of bags of gold. That is why three gold balls, sometimes represented as oranges, are one of the symbols for St. Nicholas. And so, St. Nicholas is a gift-giver. <https://www.stnicholascenter.org/who-is-st-nicholas>

- **Prayer**

A Prayer to Saint Nicholas of Myra

O good St. Nicholas, you who are the joy of the children, put in my heart the Spirit of childhood, which the Gospel speaks, and teach me to seed happiness around me. You, whose feast prepares us for Christmas, open my faith to the mystery of God made man. You good bishop and shepherd, help me to find my place in the Church. AMEN



Thursday, December 7, 2023

Thursday of the First Week of Advent

- **Readings of the day**
 - Isaiah 26:1-6
 - Psalm 118
 - Matthew 7:21, 24-27



- **Reflection**

Like Israel, we are reminded that righteousness and peace embrace each other and that the fruit of righteousness is God's perfect peace - peace with God and the peace of God. It was at Calvary that righteousness and peace kissed each other, in Christ - for without righteousness there can be no peace and without peace there is no righteousness.

And so, we are called to trust in the Lord, our Righteousness, forever and ever - and the Son of Righteousness will rise with healing in His wings. We are called to trust in the Lord with all our heart and not to lean upon our own understanding, because the Lord our God is our everlasting Rock - He is our Fortress in times of trouble and He is our exceedingly great reward.

<https://dailyverse.knowing-jesus.com/isaiah-26-4>

- **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your never-failing goodness and Your promise of peace and righteousness in Christ Jesus my Lord. Keep me looking to You, depending upon You and trusting in You every day of my life, for You are my everlasting Rock, my God and my Father, my Saviour and King and I love You Lord, in Jesus' name I pray, AMEN

- **Readings of the Day**

- Genesis 3:9-15, 20
- Psalm 98
- Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12
- Luke 1:26-38



- **Reflection**

Happy Solemnity! This is a day to celebrate! Today, we honor the glorious and miraculous Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mother, an act of God's most profound mercy.

It is fitting that we see the Immaculate Conception as an act of profound mercy. Why is that so? What is it about this solemnity that is so closely linked to mercy?

Mercy is a gratuitous gift of God. By "gratuitous" we mean that it is not merited or earned. Mercy is not owed to us by God. If it were, it would not be mercy, it would be our right. But we have no right to mercy. It is freely given by God, and it is given in abundance.

As for this glorious Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, it's important to look at it as a gratuitous gift from two perspectives. First, the "Immaculate Conception" means that when God created the Blessed Virgin Mary, He created her without sin. This was done through what we call a prevenient grace. This grace given her is an act of God's perfect and gratuitous mercy. She did not earn it or merit it; rather, God in His goodness chose to create her without original sin so as to have a suitable instrument by which the Son could come into the world. Mary, for her part, embraced this gift and chose to remain sinless throughout her life by a continual act of her free will.

Second, in creating our Blessed Mother immaculately, God did not keep her to Himself. He was not selfish with her. Instead, He chose to make this perfection of His creation our own mother. The Immaculate Mother Mary is now our spiritual mother in the order of God's grace and mercy. This, also, is an act of perfect gratuitous mercy on the part of our loving God. We do not deserve such a spiritual mother and protectress, but we have her, and she is always there interceding for us and bestowing many graces from God upon us as a perfect mother would.

Reflect, today, upon this twofold gratuitous gift of God's mercy: 1) He created Mary Immaculate out of mercy, and 2) He gave her to us as our own mother and queen. Seek her motherly care today and throughout the year!

<https://catholic-daily-reflections.com/2019/12/08/immaculate-conception-of-the-blessed-virgin-mary-2/>

- **Prayer**

Dearest Mother my Queen, I gaze upon the beauty and holiness of you who, though a mere creature, are perfect in every way. You have been granted this singular and gratuitous grace from God with which you perfectly cooperated. May I always rely upon your motherly love and care and may I always allow you to bestow the grace of God upon me in accord with the Father's plan. You, dearest mother, are a gratuitous gift of Mercy to us all! Mother Mary, I love you. Pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.

Saturday, December 9, 2023

Saturday of the First Week of Advent

- **Readings of the Day**
 - Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26
 - Psalm 147
 - Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5a, 5-8
- **Reflection**

“THE
HARVEST
IS PLENTIFUL BUT
THE
LABORERS
ARE FEW”
(MATTHEW 9:37)

Every one of us is being called to be a harvester. Each one of us can reach a corner of the harvest field that is accessible to no one else. These include my family, my neighbours, my work colleagues, and others who come into my life. I may be the only person who brings Jesus with his healing and compassion into their lives.

There are so many people who need to hear the message of love and compassion in their lives today. Where can I harvest? <https://www.sacredspace.ie/content/matthew-935-101-6-8>

- **Prayer**

Compassionate God, you look with kindness in all your creatures. May we too be moved with pity to teach, proclaim, and heal. Through Christ our Lord. AMEN

