



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

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2011

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

The time is now

In an Advent pastoral letter to his diocese, the 15th-century bishop of Milan and later saint Charles Borromeo wrote: “Beloved, now is the acceptable time spoken of by the Spirit . . . This is the time eagerly awaited by the patriarchs and prophets.” Note the saint is using the present tense: “Now is”; “this is.” Advent has a way of reaching into the past and making Christ’s coming a living reality in the present. It also, however, looks ahead. In a time of preparing to celebrate Christ’s first Advent we ready ourselves for his second—as Borromeo said in his letter: “The church asks us to understand that Christ, who came once in the flesh, is prepared to come again. When we remove all obstacles to his presence he will come, at any hour and moment, to dwell spiritually in our hearts.”

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37 (2)*

“Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come.”

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28 ADVENT WEEKDAY

Home sweet home

The town of Capernaum served as “home base” for much of Jesus’ Galilean ministry. He taught in the synagogue there, and it is the scene of many of his healings, including that of Saint Peter’s mother-in-law. In fact it likely was the hometown of Peter and of Andrew, the first disciples Jesus called. We all need to feel “at home” somewhere. Planting roots helps us feel connected and to flourish and make a contribution to the world. Do you feel “at home” where you live, connected to your community? If not, what can you do to begin putting down roots? Jesus knew he needed a home base in order to fulfill his mission. How about you?

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 8:5-11 (175)*

“When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion approached him.”

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29 ADVENT WEEKDAY

Get wise

In these times of war, political conflict, and growing poverty, it’s hard to imagine a state of affairs in which wisdom and justice reign and everything works together for the good. Yet that’s exactly the possibility God has promised and offered from the prophets to Jesus. The more the world knows the ways of God—and the more it follows them—the closer we will get to that place where all have what they need and act justly toward one another.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24 (176)*

“There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord.”

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30 FEAST OF ANDREW, APOSTLE

Pass it on

On the feast of Andrew the apostle we might consider how significant it is that the church is “apostolic” as well as one, holy, and catholic. While the leadership of the church in 2,000-plus years has had its share of rascals, it has always been of the highest importance that the followers of Christ trace their spiritual ancestry to those original 12 because it was to them that Jesus entrusted his mission and message. If people alive today trace back their faith to its origins, they will come to Saint Andrew

and to the thousands who have faithfully passed on to us what they have received.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Romans 10:9-18; Matthew 4:18-22 (684)*

“Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.”

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1 ADVENT WEEKDAY

Just believe

Scripture makes a point of linking justice and faith. Isaiah spoke of the messiah to come for whom “justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips.” Keeping faith and acting justly are two sides of the same coin because fidelity to God’s commandments and laws—which, as Jesus said, boils down to loving God and others with one’s whole self—will create a world of justice. It starts with your commitment to love.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 26:1-6; Matthew 7:21, 24-27 (178)*

“Open up the gates to let in a nation that is just, one that keeps faith.”

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2 ADVENT WEEKDAY

Patience, people

Advent is a season of waiting. Children eagerly await Christmas, and while the jingle and jangle of this time may have many adults secretly waiting for Christmas to pass, the liturgical season of Advent has a different purpose: Waiting on the Lord is a spiritual practice with many hidden benefits. It involves the cultivation of quiet patience and of realizing that our trials and struggles may not pass in a day, but that with patience, prayer, and perseverance they will indeed pass. With its darkening days and falling temperatures, this part of the year offers the right ambiance for reflecting on the passage of time and seasons past. Allow yourself some quiet time, some down time if you like. Let the season work its quiet magic on you.

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 29:17-24; Matthew 9:27-31 (179)*

“Wait for the Lord with courage; be stouthearted, and wait for the Lord.”

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3 FEAST OF FRANCIS XAVIER, PRIEST

Go west, young missionaries

If Saint Francis Xavier—considered the greatest Christian missionary after Saint Paul—were alive today, what would his mission territory be? If he were to follow the pope’s advice, he’d head to the West—that is, to the industrialized nations of Europe and North America. In a statement about the need for a new evangelization, Pope Benedict XVI said that in the West “many of the baptized lead totally un-Christian lives and more and more persons maintain some links to the faith but have little or poor knowledge of it.” The goal of missionaries in the new evangelization is not to proselytize but rather to help Catholics and Christians “discover the richness they already possess.” Become a missionary in the new evangelization: Invite a friend to sign up to receive *Take Five for Faith!*

TODAY’S READINGS: *Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8 (180)*

“Jesus went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues.”

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Scripture quotes come from the New American Bible.

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