

Sunday, Nov 30, 2025

Expect the unexpected

It may seem strange to talk about Christ's Second Coming when we're just starting to prepare for the celebration of his first. But that's exactly what the scripture readings for the first two Sundays of Advent do; it's not until the third and fourth Sundays that we get to the Incarnation part. "You . . . must be prepared," we hear, "for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." What gives? Why speak of the End at the Beginning? Because in both cases Jesus becomes present to the world. Our task is to be ready to receive that presence, at the beginning and the end and all the time in between.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44 (1). *"Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed."*

Monday, Dec 01, 2025

An inspiration for the centuries

To become a Roman centurion, a soldier had to be literate, come highly recommended, be at least 30 years of age, and have already served some time in the Roman army. This was no cushy job. Centurions suffered heavy casualties in battle because they led their "century" of troops from the front. However, their brave example inspired courage in the soldiers who followed behind them. One well-known centurion also became an inspiration of faith for centuries of Christians when he asks that Jesus "only say the word" to heal his ailing servant. Do you have such faith in Jesus' healing power in your own life?

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Isaiah 4:2-6; Matthew 8:5-11 (175). *"Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith."*

Tuesday, Dec 02, 2025

Living Christmas

'Tis the season when scenes of peace and serenity start arriving in our mailboxes daily. Every Christmas card is a bid for a more hopeful world. A star shines against the darkness of a fearful nation. A child is born into a culture sadly given over to ways of death and destruction. Wild animals learn to live together as people never do. Even Saint Nick brings gifts through a spirit of generosity as wide as his belly. This year let's bring those Christmas scenes to life, so that, in the words of Saint Teresa of Calcutta, "When Christ comes to you in Christmas, He may find in you a warm home, warm love like that of a heartfelt of love."

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Isaiah 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24 (176). *"Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid."*

Wednesday, Dec 03, 2025

How to build a fire

One of the founding members of the Jesuits, Saint Francis Xavier (1506-52) is considered to have been one of the greatest missionaries since the apostles. Appointed to re-evangelize portions of the Far East, Francis placed himself with the lowest castes, preaching to the sick and dying at hospitals and orphans and slaves in the street. He understood that if the fire of Christianity were to spread through the East, the kindling must begin at the base of society. Rather than arriving like a royal ambassador, Francis clothed himself with rags and made his home in the lowliest shelters. Francis' humble appearance proved to be the greatest tool for bringing the message of Christ to others. "It is not the actual

physical exertion that counts towards one's progress," Francis explains, "nor the nature of the task, but by the spirit of faith with which it is undertaken." Gather a spirit of faith as you set out on your own daily missions.

MEMORIAL OF FRANCIS XAVIER, PRIEST

Isaiah 25:6-10a; Matthew 15:29-37 (177). *"My heart is moved with pity for the crowd."*

Thursday, Dec 04, 2025

Spoken through the prophets

Historically speaking, the various deities revered by tribes and cultures around the world usually did little more than reinforce the position of those in power. From the Egyptians to the Aztecs, civilizations usually were led by a religious elite who controlled the resources, made the decisions, and "spoke for the gods." That is what makes the testimony of the Jewish prophets so remarkable. They regularly took the rich and powerful to task while advocating for the poor and marginalized. Anyone who doubts the authenticity of biblical literature should pause to consider the striking originality of the prophetic testimony. Surely that testimony would not have survived the censorship of the Jewish elites unless a Higher Power was calling the shots! Take time to read the divinely inspired scriptures that are foundational to our faith.

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Isaiah 26:1-6; Matthew 7:21, 24-27 (178). *"The LORD is an eternal Rock. He humbles those in high places."*

Friday, Dec 05, 2025

Do you understand?

At First Sight is a movie that tells the true story of a blind man who, at the urging of a friend, undergoes experimental surgery to restore his sight. The operation is successful; his retina works and he can see. Or at least his eyes function. But he finds he must still finger objects to "know" what they are. He can "see" a cheese grater, for example, but he doesn't know what it is until he has felt it with his hands. Seeing is a function of light striking the retina, but it takes the mind to interpret what we are looking at. Sight is one thing; understanding what we see is another. Take time today to consider the meaning behind the glory of God's creation.

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Isaiah 29:17-24; Matthew 9:27-31 (179). *"Out of gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind shall see."*

Saturday, Dec 06, 2025

The cure for what ails us

As Jesus sent out the 12 apostles after empowering them to proclaim God's kingdom and heal the sick, he admonished them not to charge for their services: "You received without payment; give without payment." As the nation struggles with difficult questions of effective, affordable, and universal healthcare, it is good to take a step back from the heat of the debate and look at larger principles. The U.S. Bishops recently stated in a letter to Congress: "We firmly believe that all people have the right to those necessities needed to live, found a family, and flourish. It is in this reality that we recognize that the right to healthcare is a fundamental necessity for the preservation of life and human flourishing." And for Jesus such care was a way of proclaiming the kingdom of God. Lend a healing hand to others and help build up God's kingdom.

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8 (180). *"The LORD binds up the wounds of his people."*

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



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