

## Sunday, Dec 14, 2025

### Examine the evidence

When John the Baptist sends his disciples to Jesus to ask if he is the Messiah, Jesus doesn't give them a direct answer but suggests they look at what they see and evaluate for themselves: The blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised. If someone as close to Jesus as John had to ask, we can forgive ourselves if at times we wonder about Jesus' saving power in our own lives. Like the disciples of John, we're challenged to figure out for ourselves by examining the evidence—in scripture, in prayer, and in our lives and the lives of loved ones. Jesus doesn't force himself on us; he trusts we have the smarts to see for ourselves.

#### THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11 (7). *“Go and tell John what you hear and see.”*

## Monday, Dec 15, 2025

### A vision of hope

Children and prophets see things others don't. The prophet Balaam saw beyond the injustice of his own generation to a time when the nation would be led by a great king who would arise in Israel. We too are called to see with that same prophetic clarity—the clear-eyed wonder of a child who perceives hope where others see only hardship. Consider the hope that comes with a little baby born in a manger as Saint Alphonsus describes it: “Mary invites all, rich and poor, just and sinners, to enter the cave of Bethlehem, to adore and to kiss the feet of her newborn Son. Go in, then, all ye devout souls; go and see the Creator of heaven and earth on a little hay, under the form of a little Infant; but so beautiful that he sheds all around rays of light. Now that he is born and is lying on the straw, the cave is no longer horrible, but is become a paradise.”

#### ADVENT WEEKDAY

Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a; Matthew 21:23-27 (187). *“I see him, though not now; I behold him, though not near.”*

## Tuesday, Dec 16, 2025

### Permission to enter

Today begins the traditional Mexican festival of Las Posadas, a commemoration of Mary and Joseph's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Customarily neighbors gather together in a procession led by a child in angel's garb and statues of the Holy Family. Together they seek out shelter at three local houses, only to be accepted at the last, where the family hosts a celebration. Seeking to share the path of the Holy Family places one in the vulnerable position of begging entrance into another's home. Remember that vulnerability when you seek to enter the shelter of God's kingdom. For quick reference, think of Saint Augustine's answer to the question of the most essential elements of Christ's teaching: “The first is humility, the second is humility, and the third is humility.”

#### ADVENT WEEKDAY; LAS POSADAS BEGINS

Zephaniah 3:1-2, 9-13; Matthew 21:28-32 (188). *“Jesus said to them, ‘Amen, I say to you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the Kingdom of God before you.’”*

## Wednesday, Dec 17, 2025

### Give me an O!

These days before Christmas are a time of final preparation for the celebration of Jesus' birth. To mark this time the church prays the “O Antiphons.” An antiphon, from the Greek word for “responsively,” is a short prayer after psalms or biblical songs. They come up in the Liturgy of the Hours, but you also pray a

kind of antiphon every Sunday: the psalm response between the first and second readings. We add the O Antiphons—so called because they all begin with “O”—to evening prayer to make this time before Christmas special. Drawn from Hebrew scripture, each of them helps us to understand Jesus. Time to get to know your Os.

#### ADVENT WEEKDAY (O WISDOM)

Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Matthew 1:1-17 (193). *“O Wisdom of our God Most High, guiding creation with power and love; come to teach us the path of knowledge!”*

## Thursday, Dec 18, 2025

### Power to the people

The word *righteousness* may sound a little quaint these days, but the concept behind the word is central to an understanding of what God asks of us. The Hebrew word it corresponds to appears more than 500 times in the Old Testament, and the Greek word it corresponds to more than 200 times in the New Testament.

Righteousness is chiefly concerned with ethical conduct: It implies faithfully keeping promises, treating people justly, and adhering to a high moral code. With justice of righteousness, “faith, hope, and charity are poured into our hearts,” says the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “and obedience to the divine will is granted us.” We have the power to be obedient to God's will; why not use it?

#### ADVENT WEEKDAY (O SACRED LORD)

Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25 (194). *“O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai: come to rescue us with your mighty power!”*

## Friday, Dec 19, 2025

### Where to find true royalty

When it came time for the prophet Samuel to anoint a new king to replace Saul, God instructed Samuel to invite Jesse and his many sons to a sacrifice. When Jesse paraded his boys in review before the prophet, God told Samuel that not the oldest, the tallest, nor the most kingly looking were the leader God sought; the next king was to be David, the youngest and lowliest, whom Jesse left tending the flocks and did not even bother to bring along. “The Lord,” God says, “does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” If you look past appearances to the hearts of others, you're likely to find true royalty, namely the Prince of Peace.

#### ADVENT WEEKDAY (O FLOWER OF JESSE'S STEM)

Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25 (195). *“O Root of Jesse's stem, sign of God's love for all his people: come to save us without delay!”*

## Saturday, Dec 20, 2025

### What's inside?

Some years ago, Saint Teresa of Calcutta visited the neonatal intensive care unit of a Boston hospital. As she walked through the doors of the unit, the machines that usually hum and buzz and beep somehow stopped making noise, and every single baby fell silent. Mother Teresa stopped at each crib, spoke with the nurses and parents, had her picture taken holding a premature infant in the palm of her hand, and left. As the doors closed behind her, the usual cacophony of the unit resumed unabated. The calm that surrounded Mother Teresa was a reflection of the peace in her heart. Advent is a good time to notice our own interior state and how it's reflected in the world around us.

#### ADVENT WEEKDAY (O KEY OF DAVID)

Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38 (196). *“O Key of David, opening the gates of God's eternal Kingdom: come and free the prisoners of darkness!”*

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



© 2025 TrueQuest Communications. All rights reserved. Noncommercial reprints permitted with the following credit: Reprinted with permission from TakeFiveForFaith.com. Scripture citations from the New American Bible Revised Edition. Sign up for free daily email available at [TakeFiveForFaith.com/subscribe](https://TakeFiveForFaith.com/subscribe).