

During this unprecedented time in our world's history, we offer you the following material for your praying and reflecting on God's Word.

Introduction - November 28, 2021

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, which is also the first Sunday of the new liturgical year. 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 today's Gospel, 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. 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. Jesus' predictions about the end times may sound dire, but 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.

Lectio Divina with the Sunday Gospel

Lectio Divina means 'divine reading'. It is a way to pray using the holy scriptures in a step-by-step process. Gather the entire family around and make the sign of the Cross. Light a candle.

Leader: "Holy Spirit, you inspired the authors of Sacred Scripture to write what you wanted us to know for the sake of our salvation. Inspire us now to hear those words not only with our ears, but our hearts, so that we might know your saving Word for us today."

- Have one person **read** the scripture slowly, out loud and have a few moments of silence afterwards. (It may be helpful for everyone to have a copy of the reading).
- **Read** the scripture again out loud and choose a single word or short phrase that touches, speaks or surprises you. Share with everyone.
- **Read** the scripture out loud one more time and discuss what is happening directly in the text.
- **Meditate** on what God is doing now in our lives through this text.
- **Respond** to what God is doing through prayer.
- **Contemplate** on what God is asking of me through this text and how to use these words as a gift for others through my actions.
- After a period of silence, end with the Sign of the Cross.

(see over)

The Holy Gospel for November 28, 2021

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus spoke to his disciples:

“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars
and on the earth distress among nations
confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves.

People will faint from fear and foreboding
of what is coming upon the world,
for the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

“Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’
with power and great glory.

Now when these things begin to take place,
stand up and raise your heads,
because your redemption is drawing near.

“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down
with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life,
and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap.
For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth.
Be alert at all times,
praying that you may have the strength
to escape all these things that will take place,
and to stand before the Son of Man.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Family Activities

- ❖ Every year, people typically make New Year’s resolutions - something they commit to doing and or changing in the new year ahead. Today marks the first day in the New Year in the life of the Church! It also marks the first day of Advent. 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.

(see over)

(Family Activities continued...)

- ❖ Set out your Advent wreath.

Blessing the Advent Wreath at Home

All make the sign of the cross

Leader: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

All: Who made heaven and earth.

Scripture reading:

[Isaiah 9: \(lines 1-2 and 5-6\)](#) **or** [Isaiah 63 \(lines 16-17 & 19\)](#) **or** [Isaiah 64 \(lines 2-7\)](#)

Reader concludes: The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Join hands

Leader: Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:

he is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples,

he is the wisdom that teaches and guides us,

he is the Saviour of every nation.

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath

May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation.

May he come quickly and not delay. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Conclude with a verse from "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel":

All: O come, desire of nations, bind in one the hearts of humankind;

bid ev'ry sad division cease and be thyself our Prince of peace.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Today, we light the first candle, a purple one, the candle of HOPE.

Prayer for Lighting the Candle - 1st Week

Waiting for Hope

SCRIPTURE: "Stay awake, for you do not know the day or the hour when your Lord will appear."

LITANY

Leader: Our response is "**O God, we place our hope in you.**"

Leader: God of our mothers and fathers, **R.**(response)

Leader: Give life to people who are weary; fill us with hope in You. **R.**

Leader: Healer of souls, renew our joy in you. Turn to us again, O God of Hosts. **R.**

Leader: Make your dwelling among us, Giver of Life; Hear our cries; we call out to you in hope. **R.**

Leader: We anxiously hope for the joy you alone can bring us. **R.**

Leader: God of light, as we wait through the long winter nights for the birth of Christ, help us to keep watch. Help us to tend the tiny flame of hope. Make us alert until your gift of joy arrives. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.