

**Sunday, Nov 27, 2022**

### The most wonderful time, indeed

"It's the most wonderful time of the year" as some popular lyrics go, and a lot of us agree. Andy Williams made the tune famous, but composers Eddie Pola and George Wyle wrote it. Ironically, Pola and Wyle were Jewish. Yet they assisted Williams in earning the title "Mr. Christmas" with their composition. The song celebrates holiday parties, caroling, mistletoe, good cheer, and loved ones near. But for believers, the season beginning today is really about anticipation and Incarnation, light illuminating the darkness, and God coming near. We know what time it is. Make this Advent a genuine celebration of hope.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44 (1). "You know the time; it is the hour now for you to awake from sleep."

**Monday, Nov 28, 2022**

### Time to get ready!

With the Thanksgiving holiday weekend wrapped up, Catholics yesterday began the Advent journey to Christmas. The word *advent* comes from Latin for "to come." All the days from now until the celebration of the birth of Jesus are preparation for his coming. Preparation in this case means remembering to be ready with a spirit of both penance and joy. Did you set out an Advent wreath on your dinner table yesterday? For many, it's the first of many Christmas decorations to come out—with festooned trees not far behind. The wreath is more than just a pretty adornment but also a daily reminder to pray as you count down each week with a new candle. Start the season out right by blessing your wreath with a prayer.

ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: 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, Nov 29, 2022**

### Listen with the ear of a child

"Advent is not a time to declare, but to listen, to listen to whatever God may want to tell us through the singing of the stars, the quickening of a baby, the gallantry of a dying man," wrote Christian writer Madeleine L'Engle, born this day in 1918. L'Engle is especially known for her children's books, including *A Wrinkle in Time*, which won the 1963 Newberry Medal. This Advent, consider what it might be like to imitate the Christ Child instead of the adult Jesus. As *A Wrinkle in Time* tells us: "To love is to be vulnerable; and it is only in vulnerability and risk—not safety and security—that we overcome darkness."

ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24 (176). "Although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike."

**Wednesday, Nov 30, 2022**

### Be first to follow the Lord

It's no coincidence that Saint Andrew the Apostle is linked to Advent (which traditionally begins on the Sunday closest to his feast day). In Eastern Christianity he is known as *protokletos*, "first called," because it was Andrew, who had been a disciple of John the Baptist, who persuaded his brother Simon (whom we know as Peter) to follow Jesus with his words, "We have found the

Messiah!" Andrew also has a devotion linked to Advent, known as the Saint Andrew Novena. Try it out and see if it supports and deepens your living out your own call.

FEAST OF ANDREW, APOSTLE

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 10:9-18; Matthew 4:18-22 (684). "At once they left their nets and followed him."

**Thursday, Dec 01, 2022**

### Build on higher ground

Anyone who has followed the news over the past year has seen more images than ever of people coping with floods. Families waiting on rooftops, people stuffed in boats, neighbors wading through murky water. Jesus constantly used images to make his point, including the image of discipleship as a solid house that stands firm during storms and floods. "Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies," Saint Teresa of Calcutta once said. Are you building a strong, flood-proof house in the small things you do each day?

ADVENT WEEKDAY

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

"Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock."

**Friday, Dec 02, 2022**

### Walk with each other

Today, the church remembers martyrs Jean Donovan, Maura Clarke, Dorothy Kazel, and Ita Ford, brutally murdered for standing with the poor in war-torn El Salvador in 1980. Their witness still speaks profoundly to us today as we encounter our own wars, violence, and suffering, especially among the most vulnerable. And still, we struggle to know what to do. Let us take courage as we ponder the questions posed by Ita Ford in 1977: "Am I willing to suffer with the people here, the suffering of the powerless? Can I say to my neighbors, 'I have no solution to this situation. I don't know the answers, but I will walk with you, search with you, be with you?'"

ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 29:17-24; Matthew 9:27-31 (179). "Let it be done for you according to your faith."

**Saturday, Dec 03, 2022**

### Missionizing begins at home

Many of the practices of the great "missionizing projects" of centuries past are seen as problematic in our age, with its greater sensibility of the rights of indigenous peoples to worship freely as they wish. So, while the legacy of one of the patrons of foreign missions, Saint Francis Xavier, is a mixed one, it is significant to note that he always provided for ongoing pastoral care of the communities he missionized and also advocated for an educated native clergy (rather than foreign-born leadership). None of us acts with perfect justice, but each of us finds oneself living in a unique historical moment, called upon to help church and society live up to the best and most noble qualities of our tradition.

MEMORIAL OF FRANCIS XAVIER, JESUIT PRIEST

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8 (180). "At the sight of the crowds, his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd."

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



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