

Sunday, Dec 03, 2023

A season of welcome

The color violet reminds us that a new season has begun: a time to prepare to welcome Christ in our midst for all days and in all persons. Coincidentally this year, Advent starts on the World Day for Persons with Disabilities. How welcoming is our church to the people with physical and mental challenges? Not just improving accessibility with an entrance ramp or elevator but providing accommodations for those with hearing, visual, and intellectual impairments, including for liturgies and sacramental preparation? Take a look around your own parish. Is it true that "all are welcome"?

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37 (2). *"We are the clay and you the potter: we are all the work of your hands."*

Monday, Dec 04, 2023

Iconic inspiration

Think of how much sacred images of Jesus, Mary, angels, and the saints—in painting, stained glass, and sculpture—have filled your life and stimulated your spirit. You might have many sacred images throughout your home. Perhaps you can find them in different public places in your city. Our Catholic churches are certainly full of them. Think of how much they inspire and prompt you to momentary prayer, a fleeting lifting of your heart and mind to God as you pass by them, or to long stretches on your knees, deep in conversation. You can partly thank John Damascene, who defended holy images against iconoclasm, a movement in the eighth century that was opposed to the veneration of icons. Treasure the rich imagery of our tradition.

MEMORIAL OF JOHN DAMASCENE, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 8:5-11 (175). *"Many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the banquet in the Kingdom of heaven."*

Tuesday, Dec 05, 2023

Be a light in the darkness

As Advent days grow ever darker, Isaiah offers hope: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (Isa. 9:1). We Christians seek the Son's light, but we also take the Savior at his word when he describes us as the "light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). 'Tis the season, to celebrate those who shared their light, such as Rosa Parks, who co-led the Montgomery bus boycott beginning this day in 1955. Or Mary McLeod Bethune, who formed the National Council of Negro Women 20 years earlier. To quote Saint Isidore of Seville (who opened the Fourth Council of Toledo on this day in 633): "Just as we must love God in contemplation, so we must love our neighbor with action."

ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24 (176). *"He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth."*

Wednesday, Dec 06, 2023

Peace on Earth requires living on the edge

This year we celebrate the centennial of the birth of Phil Berrigan, the famed peace activist and one-time Josephite priest. His dedication to serve the African-American community quickly blossomed into an all-out crusade for justice, resulting in his many

arrests, sentences, and continuing activities to emphasize the Catholic opposition to bloodshed. He was hardly rewarded for his efforts in this life, and in this time of war in our day, we owe him a great debt. We can pay it by walking as he walked, in the path toward peace.

ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 25:6-10a; Matthew 15:29-37 (177). *"On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, The web that is woven over all nations; he will destroy death forever."*

Thursday, Dec 07, 2023

Unite to fight for good

Today is Pearl Harbor Day, when the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor officially thrust the United States into World War II. Americans sacrificed in multiple ways to serve the war effort, from military service to rationing. What if we were to unite in the same way to fight poverty? An emphasis on charity and justice for the poor exists within all the Abrahamic traditions, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Who is fighting poverty in your community? Take a step today to unite with them.

ADVENT WEEKDAY

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 26:1-6; Matthew 7:21, 24-27 (178). *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of heaven."*

Friday, Dec 08, 2023

A day of grace

Today is all about grace. It was God's grace that provided Mary with the privilege of being born without original sin; it was Mary's grace that said yes to God's plan; and it is our grace to honor Mary's witness and protection. As Pope John Paul II explains, "Grace means love and the gift of God himself, the completely free gift in which God entrusts to [us] his Mystery." In honor of this day, pray the mysteries of the Rosary.

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (PATRONAL FEAST DAY OF THE U.S.A.)

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38 (689). *"Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you."*

Saturday, Dec 09, 2023

Mary mirrors her people

Can you imagine what today's saint, Juan Diego, was going through when he encountered Our Lady of Guadalupe? First of all, she looked nothing like the pictures of the Blessed Virgin he was used to. She wasn't a blue-eyed, white European. She was brown-skinned with dark hair and dark eyes. She wasn't wearing a blue veil either. And she didn't even speak to him in Spanish, but in Nahuatl, the ancient language of his ancestral Aztec. Was she for real? When the image of the Virgin appeared on his cloak, he knew she was. Celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe, who acts as a reflection for all the faithful.

MEMORIAL OF JUAN DIEGO CUAUHTLATOATZIN, VISIONARY

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8 (180). *"As you go, make this proclamation: 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"*

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



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