

**Sunday, Nov 26, 2023**

**Save the best for last**

The film industry has always had a love affair with the afterlife. From *It's a Wonderful Life* to *Heaven Can Wait* to *Ghost* to *Flatliners*, stories remind us that our choices in this world have ramifications in the next. More recent shows—*Dead Like Me*, *The Good Life*, *After Life*, and *Hotel del Luna* among many others—are less traditionally religious but no less curious about what comes next. Every culture and generation seems to sense the need for spirit guides and guardians, as well as justice and an hour of reckoning. As the church year closes, contemplate the ledger of your years. Does it add up to a heavenly ending?

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

TODAY'S READINGS: Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28; Matthew 25:31-46 (160). *"He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'"*

**Monday, Nov 27, 2023**

**Conversion can be revolutionary**

British poet Alice Meynell, who died on this day in 1922, converted to Catholicism while recovering from chronic illness, and her writing thereafter turned to religious subjects. She married a Catholic newspaper publisher and founded a Catholic suffragist organization. When a British priest preached against giving women the right to vote because it would risk "bringing a revolution of the first magnitude," Meynell replied, "...the vaster the magnitude of the revolution, the better." One hundred years after her death, the struggle for equality continues. How do the teachings of Jesus inform your work for justice?

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 1:1-6, 8-20; Luke 21:1-4 (503). *"She, from her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood."*

**Tuesday, Nov 28, 2023**

**Little lamb, who made thee?**

Happy birthday to the English poet William Blake, born this day in 1757. Though not Catholic, he's inspired great Catholic poets and many of his poems—like "Jerusalem"—became hymns. Trappist monk Thomas Merton wrote his master's thesis on Blake, emphasizing his spiritual significance in *Seven Storey Mountain*: "His rebellion ... was fundamentally the rebellion of the saints. It was the rebellion of the lover of the living God, the rebellion of the one whose desire of God was so intense and irresistible that it condemned, with all its might, all the hypocrisy and petty sensuality and skepticism and materialism" of organized religion. Pray for all who search for God but find obstacles in religious institutions—and enjoy Blake's "The Lamb."

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 2:31-45; Luke 21:5-11 (504). *"Jesus said, 'All that you see here—the days will come when there will not be left a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down.'"*

**Wednesday, Nov 29, 2023**

**Gracious encounters of the digital kind**

Did you buy anything on Cyber Monday? Did you make a charitable donation yesterday, on Giving Tuesday? Whether you did or not, this week's digital focus continues today, which is recognized as Electronic Greetings Day. Pope Francis' 2020

encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* considers how the internet is a powerful tool and how it's our job to use it in a way that makes the world better. "We need constantly to ensure that present-day forms of communication are in fact guiding us to generous encounter with others," he writes. Make time today to send an encouraging email or ecard to someone who needs to hear from you.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28; Luke 21:12-19 (505). *"The writing I will read for you, O king, and tell you what it means."*

**Thursday, Nov 30, 2023**

**Be a first responder**

Is there an Andy, Andre, or Andrea in your life? Whether they know it or not, they bear the name of the Apostle Andrew, one of the fishermen Jesus famously called to be "fishers of men." The Eastern church recognizes Andrew as the first to be called by Jesus. Tradition has it that Andrew was crucified on an X-shaped cross because he felt unworthy to die on a cross identical to Christ's. Andrew led the way in accepting Jesus' invitation to follow him. How will your life today respond to that invitation?

FEAST OF ANDREW, APOSTLE

TODAY'S READINGS: Romans 10:9-18; Matthew 4:18-22 (684). *"Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

**Friday, Dec 01, 2023**

**Compassionate in the face of controversy**

St. Vincent Medical Center in Manhattan, now closed, was in the eye of the AIDS epidemic storm of the 1980s and 1990s. A Catholic hospital run by the Sisters of Charity, St. Vincent opened its doors to care for those who were sick and dying from AIDS. Some staff disagreed with this stance and left. But not the sisters. They stayed true to Jesus' command to care for the suffering, especially those cast aside by society. They entered into dialogue with the gay community, activists, and hospital administrators to better understand their patients and how best to serve them. May we remember their unwavering commitment and compassion—and do likewise.

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 7:2-14; Luke 21:29-33 (507). *"Know that the Kingdom of God is near."*

**Saturday, Dec 02, 2023**

**Be a freedom fighter**

The term *modern slavery* covers practices such as forced labor, debt bondage, forced marriage, and human trafficking ... situations of exploitation enforced by violence, coercion, or deception. Here's the shocking news: Modern slavery has increased significantly in the past five years. Ten million more people, largely women and children, were trapped in modern slavery in 2021 compared to 2016, bringing the total estimate to 50 million worldwide. Our God is a God of freedom, who releases us from bondage of all kinds. On this U.N. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, raise your voice in a phone call, email, or letter to elected officials. Let's put an end to this!

TODAY'S READINGS: Daniel 7:15-27; Luke 21:34-36 (508). *"Be vigilant at all times."*

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



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