

## Sunday, Dec 15, 2019

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### What are we waiting for?

Some people make the incredible claim that, 2,000 years ago, God's spoken Word became flesh and blood. This incarnate Word lived and served and saved—not by rising to tremendous power, but by dying and rising to new life. A lot rides on John the Baptist's question to Jesus: Are you the one? If not you, then who? If Jesus is the one, trusting in him means embracing a startling trajectory of service and surrender in a world of upward striving. It will turn our own lives inside out. What does it cost you to say: "Jesus is Lord"?

TODAY'S READINGS: Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11 (7). "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?"

## Monday, Dec 16, 2019

ADVENT WEEKDAY

### Invest in the teachings

*Magisterium* is a mighty big word that means a lot to Catholics. The word derives from the Latin for "teacher." It refers to the sacred deposit of faith, which includes both scripture and tradition, that's been entrusted to the church. And it is the source of the church's authority to interpret this deposit of faith, which has been divinely revealed by Christ, the "Word made flesh." What an immense gift from God, for all of us to be shown so much. Be faithful to it.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a; Matthew 21:23-27 (187). "By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?"

## Tuesday, Dec 17, 2019

ADVENT WEEKDAY

### Soon and very soon

Finally, like a long exhalation during the final week before Christmas, we pray the "O Antiphons," which give us different ways to image the long-awaited Messiah. Some of the more colorful names are: Wisdom, Root of Jesse's stem, Key of David, Radiant Dawn. Praying with one each day unites us to the universal church over many centuries. Check out YouTube for a video that provides historical background on the O Antiphons. Take a moment to watch it as part of your Advent observation.

TODAY'S READINGS: Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Matthew 1:1-17 (193). "Of her was born Jesus, . . . called the Christ."

## Wednesday, Dec 18, 2019

ADVENT WEEKDAY

### Prelude to Nativity

Today is International Migrants Day, reminding us that all biblical people, including the Holy Family, were obliged to roam to survive. The mystery of the Incarnation, Christ in us, is extended to all people, especially those who have been driven from their homelands by violence and crushing poverty, and who stand at our border seeking help. Should we wall them out or extend a hand in friendship and solidarity? All of us need rescuing! "O Leader of the House of Israel, giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai: Come to rescue us with your mighty power!"

TODAY'S READINGS: Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25 (194). "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

## Thursday, Dec 19, 2019

ADVENT WEEKDAY

### Lord, come and save us

"O Root of Jesse's stem, sign of God's love for all his people: Come to save us without delay!" Today is the third day of the church's week of O Antiphons, used at evening prayer to count down the final days of Advent. Each gives a different depiction of the Messiah; each captures the longing of a people yearning to be saved. Today's imagery comes from Isaiah 11:1, where God establishes the House of David from beleaguered beginnings: "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." David, the youngest son of Jesse, is as improbable a king as the Christ Child will be. If you haven't been praying the O Antiphons this week, it's not too late to start; nor is it too late to decorate a Jesse Tree, based on the same Isaiah verse.

TODAY'S READINGS: Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25 (195). "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard."

## Friday, Dec 20, 2019

ADVENT WEEKDAY

### Make room at the inn

There's a special Christmas season novena—that is, nine days of prayer—that commemorates the nine months of Mary's pregnancy with Jesus, as well as her journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and it is done in the nine days leading up to his birthday. Called *Las Posadas*, which means "lodging," it is celebrated by many Spanish-speaking cultures with re-enactments of Joseph and Mary (often with entourage and even a donkey!) knocking on neighbors' doors seeking a "place to stay." A party usually ensues. Remember all those in the world who are journeying to find shelter for their children, and work to make our communities more open to them. In fact, celebrate their presence!

TODAY'S READINGS: 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!"

## Saturday, Dec 21, 2019

MEMORIAL OF PETER CANISIUS, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

### Common ground is high ground

Peter Canisius (1521-97), a Dutch Jesuit priest who was a contemporary of Saint Ignatius, was a learned and capable scholar who started many Jesuit colleges. Peter had a gift for making theological doctrine understandable. To that end, he wrote three catechisms that helped common folk and children understand the teachings of the church and ground their faith. Peter's ability to listen in working with non-Catholics helped him respect differences and seek common ground. We ask Saint Peter Canisius to help us listen to those with whom we differ and seek common ground.

TODAY'S READINGS: Song of Songs 2:8-14 or Zephaniah 3:14-18a; Luke 1:39-45 (197). "O Radiant Dawn, splendor of eternal light, sun of justice: Come and shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death."

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



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