



ST. ROMUALD CATHOLIC CHURCH

394 N HWY 259 · HARDINSBURG KY 40143

www.stromuald.org

dear Padre

Parish Office:

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Hours: Monday - Friday

8:00am - Noon, 1:00 - 3:00pm

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Email: Brian.Johnson@pastoral.org

Deacon, Tony Anthony

Deacon, Mike Wiedemer

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CRE: RCIA, Lyvenia Anthony

CRE: 7-12, Gayle Poole

CRE: K-6, Kim Brumfield

Pastoral Council:

Dana Bland, Harry Mattingly,

Janet Bland, David Morton

Christi Brooks, Kevin Oelze

Chris Brumfield, Don Payne,

Jerry Dowell, Gail Pollock

Betty Heavrin, Pam Pollock

St. Romuald

Interparochial School:

Phone: 756-5504

Website:

www.stromualdschool.org

Principal, Rob Cox

School Board

Representatives:

Jamie Barr, Amy Flood,

Jennifer Payne

I want my son to be confirmed this year, but he won't go to confirmation classes or select a sponsor. What should I do?

When your son was baptized, you promised to raise him in the faith. Going to Mass and making faith part of your home life has been part of his upbringing, but forcing him to be confirmed can result in resentment and drive him further from you and his Catholic faith. Try these three things:

First, have a heartfelt and personal discussion (or several) with him, sharing what your Catholic faith means to you.

Second, speak with the confirmation teacher or DRE. He or she has dealt with this before and can work with you both to understand his refusal.

Third, engage him in discovering God at work in his life through the people and movements he's attracted to. Young people are often idealistic and can become disenchanted with the Church and other authority figures. The sooner they know you're willing to let them examine and understand what being Catholic means, the less inclined they will be to reject the Church.

What he needs is the steady, meaningful message that he is loved and important to you, God, and the Church. Trust that God's will comes to fruition. Confirmation should occur when a person manifests a true desire and has undergone necessary preparation. These suggestions aren't easy but reflect the faith you want to pass on.

From Liguorian, July-August 2011 sundaybulletin@liguori.org

November 27, 2016 - First Sunday of Advent

Masses for the Week

November 28th - December 4th

Tues	1:00 pm	Norma Ward Family (Extended Care)
Wed	5:00 pm	Ron Wilcheck (CW)
Thurs	9:30 am	Herbert Johnson (AJ) (Medco)
Fri	9:00 am	J. Paul & Mary W. Henning (RO)
Sat	8:00 am	Martin Johnson (AJ)
	5:00 pm	Ann Critchelow (JC)
Sun	7:00 am	James Bland (SB)
	10:00 am	Earl O'Donoghue (PO)

CONFESSIONS

Wednesday 4:00-5:00pm

Saturdays 4:00 pm

Readings for the Week

Sunday: Is 2:1-5/Ps 122/Rom 13:11-14/Mt 24:37-44
 Monday: Is 4:2-6/Ps 122/Mt 8:5-11
 Tuesday: Is 11:1-10/Ps 72/Lk 10:21-24
 Wednesday: Rom 10:9-18/Ps 23/Mt 4:18-22
 Thursday: Is 26:1-6/Ps 118/Mt 7:21, 24-27
 Friday: Is 29:17-24/Ps 27/Mt 9:27-31
 Saturday: Is 30:19-21, 23-26/Ps 147/Mt 9:35--10:1, 5a, 6-8
 Next Sunday: Is 11:1-10/Ps 72/Rom 15:4-9/Mt 3:1-12

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Stewardship of Finance

Last Sunday's Collection

Sunday Collection	\$
Building Fund	\$
Children	\$
Loose change for the Poor.....	\$

Amounts will be published in next week's bulletin

St. Romuald Parish Financial Summary

July-October, 2016

Total Income	\$177,800
Total Expenses	\$173,200
	\$ 3,800

Thank you for your financial stewardship!



December 3rd & 4th

	Eucharistic Ministers	Lectors	Ushers	Servers	Rosary Leaders	Music Ministers
5:00 pm	Kathy Flood Millie Whittler	Shannon Aldridge Brenda Wheatley	C-Tim Aldridge* C-Jim Bland S-Sam Bland S-Will Bland	Ben Aldridge Lola Allen Preston Flood	Dayle Riley	Shannon
7:00 am	Faye Glasscock Denise Hardesty	Cathy Lewis	C-Bryce Glasscock* C-D.J. Glasscock S-Kenny Glasscock S-Greg Hardesty	Gabe Carwile Luke Carwile	Lorena Bland	
10:00 am	Kathryn Ables LaDonna Barton Lori Carwile Sharon Hale	Danny Shaine Suzanne Rose	C-Chase Robbins* C-Chuck Robbins S-Jim Sills S-Allen Wheatley	Will Lewis Christian Wheatley	Sandy Horsley	P.J.

Radio Minister: Ann Tritschler

Children's Liturgy:

2 | Welcome to St. Romuald Catholic Church

Words from the Pastor

+JMJ+

Happy Advent! We begin our four week countdown to celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas! Some people wonder why the first readings of Advent often repeat-echo the last readings concluding the church year? Begin or end? Both sets sound the alarm about the end times. So, is it a beginning after all, or just a continued ending? The short answer is that when Jesus comes, nothing is ever the same! Total change! Even the same words take on new meaning when God is birthed into history! Time's place evaporates in Christ's presence! End or beginning, neither matters when Christ shows up! Jesus says as much when he speaks to the Pharisees, blowing their minds (and their world apart) in John 8 56-58, "Your father Abraham was overjoyed to see My day. He saw it and was glad. Truly, truly, I tell you, **before Abraham was born, I am!**" The Pharisees thought Jesus was crazy and said back to him "You are not even fifty years old yet, and you say you saw Abraham?" But what is time to Jesus-God, the Divine Presence? And if we are united to Jesus, what is time to us, as long as He is with us? The key is to have Christ with us; then time can go out the window! Think about those great stories of transformation when people meet Jesus and their whole world is re-ordered; their lives undergo a whole-sale re-orientation. Complete conversions and total horizon expansions! For example, consider the gospel stories of the woman at the well in John chapter 4:4-42, or Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10, or the man from the tombs in Luke 8:26-39. Once they meet and experience Jesus they are never the same. Time-Everything is entirely new and forever different. So I like to think that when Jesus comes, everything changes! His birth opens the world to possibilities never imagined before, like we hear about from Isaiah 11:6 "**the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat; the calf and the lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them.**" Such scenes mark new times! Or what the angels announce in the sky over Bethlehem on Christmas night, "**Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests**" (Luke 2:14). Who can imagine such possibilities? Unlikely, we say? Well, our readings stir it up. They call us to watch and to wait. Think about this: at the most unlikely hour, the Lord will appear, so just as unexpected may come the peace that washes over the world, turning the tide of hatred into compassion, and the tide of violence into justice. Do you not think so? Remember then, who knows the day or hour? So, if we do not know the time of His coming, then why do we claim to know what will happen when he comes?

Our advent readings remind me of the old game show that had the line in it of Monty Hall asking "do you want what is behind door number 1 or door number 2?" In that game show, if a person chose the losing door, when it opened there would be a dressed-up-donkey, instead of a new refrigerator or travel vacation! (Thinking Christmas, nothing is wrong with a donkey- we needed one to bring Jesus to Bethlehem). In Advent, we are asked to open the right door: the door to the kingdom of Jesus! To open the right door, we have to be watching and waiting for it. Our gospel reading brings up Noah to emphasize the unexpectedness of the end ! In Noah's time, everything is just going along like it always had been, until that moment the heavy rains begin and don't stop for 40 days! Normal activities are going on, with people going to market, fixing dinners and eating, working jobs, marrying and starting families. THEN, one day, all is washed away! Except those who had an eye open to the coming judgment of God and were ready and waiting by not being lulled to sleep (Noah's family that chose the right door entering the Ark!). Jesus'

followers need to stay awake and be ready on alert for His return! How do we do that? Most simply, by being prepared. Can a person truly keep one eye always open (won't it dry out?) We have to live and so arrange the structure of our lives, that even when we do close our eyes even for a minute, everything remains prepared and covered. Maybe we Christians work in shifts, praying and keeping prepared together (sounds like our Church's Advent practices like lighting candles, doing penance and praying for each other!) Or think about parents who keep vigil and watch over their children, maybe sleeping lightly with one ear openly pointed toward the door. Or think of parents taking shifts watching over a sick child, or sleeping with a baby monitor by the bed to listen for any cries or movement. Monks in monasteries used to take this literally, having someone or two designated to keep the overnight fire watch (night wasn't that long because all the monks rose at 3:00 am for vigils prayer! In the old tradition they rose at 1:30 am!) Maybe you have heard of the meditation essay of Thomas Merton called 'The Fire Watch' which he wrote as he was serving 'watch-duty' in the monastery while others slept. Some of his 'Fire Watch' is a great summary of what Advent/ Christmas is about, so here are some of **Merton's own words** to reflect upon for us: "**The Fire Watch is an examination of conscience in which your task as watchman suddenly appears in its true light; a pretext devised by God to isolate you, and to search your soul with lamps and questions, in the heart of darkness..... What is waiting to be born in all our hearts? Suffering? Deception? Heroism? Defeat? Peace? Betrayal? Sanctity? Death? Glory?..... confronted by all these questions I cannot answer.....our most urgent concern is the renunciation of all questions.....**" Merton then ends his essay by having God tell us "**Do not lay up for yourselves ecstasies on earth, where time and space corrupt, where the minutes break in and steal. No more lay hold on time, My son, lest rivers bear you away. What was poor has become infinite.**" So while we watch for God, He in fact has been watching us, and surprises by appearing among us! That is Christmas: God become human. God surprises us by entering human poverty and filling it up! Every Christmas, God desires to change us forever! Do we open the right door? The Door (#1) that is Jesus himself opens unimagined possibilities for good, or the door (#2) that keeps us stuck in the past closed off to conversion? What do we want for Christmas?

Here are some daily questions to consider in our prayer time!

Sunday: What message did I pick up from Mass today?

Monday: Did I give God prayer time this morning to start the week off right?

Tuesday: How do I stay awake and aware of God every minute of the day?

Wednesday: What can I ask God to change about myself for good this Christmas?

Thursday: Would I have the courage of Noah to build, without the world understanding me?

Friday: Perform some act of mercy or anonymous act of kindness for someone today.

Saturday: For what, am I especially thankful to offer as prayer at Mass this weekend?

Peace and Prayers, Fr Brian Johnson

Marriage Help – Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vi) has helped thousands of couples who are disillusioned or even experiencing misery in their marriage. This program can help you too. For confidential information about or to register for the January program beginning with a weekend on Jan 13, 2017, call 270-852-8346, or email: flelliot@audubon-area.com or visit the web site at www.retrouvaille.org

Al-Anon Meeting: Mondays 7:00 pm St Romuald Parish Hall. Come find support and understanding to recover a sense of serenity in your life.



Senior's Thanksgiving Lunch With Guest Speaker—Dale DePoyster



Welcome to St. Romuald Catholic Church

Gift of Joy The Blessing of a Child in the Womb

"The presence of new life in the womb of the mother brings joy and hope to the center of our families, our Church, and our world. It is the ultimate gift. At the very same moment when God created your child, He also created you as a mother and father."

On December 3rd and 4th, Father Brian will be offering a special blessing to any expectant mother who would like to participate. We invite the mother to stand, along with the father, or any other family member to experience the "Gift of Joy." The blessing is bestowed upon you, and you will receive a booklet as a point of reference to read during the time you carry your child.

All expectant mothers are welcome to receive the blessing at any of the Masses during this weekend.

Anointing of the Sick Offered at Weekend Mass

on December 10-11. We look forward to praying with and anointing any ill or suffering parishioners at masses the weekend of December 10-11, as we offer the anointing sacrament of the sick.

Sometimes people ask who can be anointed, and the Church teaches that those who are seriously ill or suffering a chronic illness, preparing for surgery or recovering from surgery can be anointed for healing and comfort.

Catholic Campaign for Human Development:

Thank you for your contributions to the collection for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD)! Your generous gifts will help CCHD break the cycle of poverty in the United States through better education, improved housing, and economic development. Through CCHD and its beneficiaries, we demonstrate Catholic social teaching and carry out Jesus' mission to "bring glad tidings to the poor...to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free: (Lk 4:18).

All Expectant Mothers Blessing: The weekend of December 3-4, we will be having a special blessing for pregnant mothers and families as they await the birth of their child! We ask God to bless mother and child with health and growth and safe delivery! And we look forward to celebrating the children's baptisms and welcoming our newest members at church!



THIS WEEK:

Mon	1:00 pm	Blue Army Rosary
	7:00 pm	Al-Anon Meeting
Tues	10:00 am	Scripture Study
	1:00 pm	Mass (Extended Care)
	6:00 pm	Pastoral Council
Wed	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Mass
Thur	9:30 am	Mass (Medco)
Fri	9:00 am	Mass
	10:00 am	24 Hour Eucharistic Adoration
Sat	8:00 am	First Saturday Mass
Sun	8:30 am	K-6 Religious Education

UPCOMING:

Dec 7	5:30 pm	Altar Society Meeting
Dec 8		Holy day Masses, 7 am, 12:05 pm & 6 pm

Attention All Ministers: We need volunteers to for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses. Please call the office if you are able to volunteer for any of the Masses. Thank You!

Christmas Card Sales: The Fourth (Patriotic) Degree of the Knights of Columbus is again selling religious Christmas Cards. Cards are available after most Masses at St. Romuald until November 27 or until sold out. Funds raised from card sales are dedicated to support of local/national civil issues. Our most recent donation was to aid Catholic Military Chaplains. For information contact George Walz at 270-617-0468 or walzes@bellsouth.net.



Sympathy: Please pray for the repose of the soul of Harold Beard and Mary Zelma Voyles (sister to Dot Burnette & mother to Kay Henning) for their families to be comforted in their time of grief.

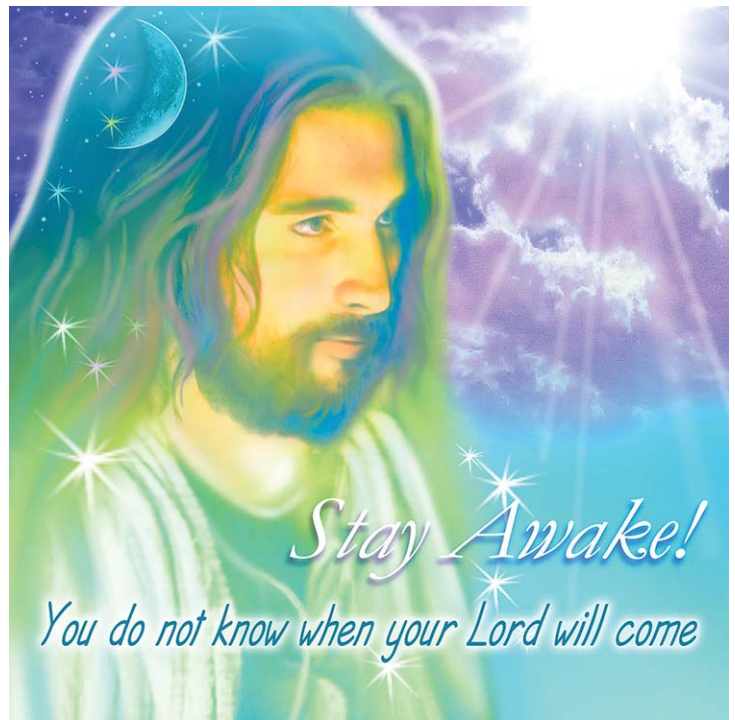
Please look over the Prayer List, if you see a name that needs to be removed call the church office at 756-2356. Thank you.

We Pray For:

Gene Aldridge, Jim Ball, Gene Bennett, Joe Bennett, Bradley Berry, Ronnie Bruner, Juanita Burch, Joann Butler, Waylon Carman, Billy Carwile, Jerry Carwile, Russel Carwile, Janet Chambliss, Diane Charlebois, Sharon Church, Joan Clark, Mary Crook, Vonda Decker, Roger Dowell, Kenneth Dowell, Davye Duggins, Mary Catherine Edge, **Shelby Elder**, Rodney Elliott, Michael Ernest, Carroll Ferguson, Rhett Flener, Donny Flood, Ginny Flood, Shannon Ford, Andrea Fuqua, Barnard Gagel, Henrietta Gibson, Dorothy Greenwell, Bill Greenwood, Jerry Grimes, Sr., Laura Beavin Hawley, Davy Haycraft, Dale Henning, JoAnn Henning, Lisa Henning, Karen Herbert, Kitty Himmelhaver, Bill Hinton, Doug Hinton, Janet Hodson, Steve Hodson, David Horsley, Daniel Hoskins, Barbara Jarboe, Virginia Jeffries, Don Jerrell, Kiara Jo, Jerry Johnson, Jim Johnson, Mary Ann Johnson, Jack Jolly, Lovel King, Tracy King, Faith Klingsmith, David Lane, Angie Lawrence, Linda Ledford, Jennie Maiden, Mark Masterson, Keith McDaniel, Ann Medlen, Kevin McHugh, Richard Miller, Blaise Mills, John Moore, Barbara O'Connell, Don O'Donoghue, Eddie O'Donoghue, Joe Oelze, Earl O'Reilly, Libby Osborne, Rowan Palmer, Judy Popham, Bobby Potts, Doris Priest, Joe Priest, Robert Priest, Sandy Priest, Tracy Ralston, Penny Rannebarger, Jamie Riley, Rita Roach, Julie Robbins, Shirley Robbins, Suzanne Rose, Annelise Sebastian, **Judy Seelye**, **Colleen Simmons**, Jerry Sosh, Lucye Stupak, Loretta Swink, Adalee Taul, Becky Taul, Beavin & Gina Thornsberry, Dorothy Tillberg, Paul Tucker, Brook Tyler, Bobby Upchurch, Gil Urban, Johnny Vessels, Nancy Vincent, Buddy Weatherholt, Greg Weise, Greg Wethington, Millie Whittler, Judy Whitley, Jimmy Whitworth, Mary Rita Whitworth, Carolyn Wilcheck, Kevin Wilcheck, Robert D. Wilson, Shaun Winstead, Anne Wolfe, Sandra Zanone.



Serving in the Armed Forces: Mandie Adams, Kevin Arnold, Fred Barham, Austin Brown, Timothy Cashen, Cody Garst, Parker Findlay, James Hanor, Jack Hayes, Stevie Higgs, James Howard, Charles Kuhlman, SSgt Bradford O'Reilly, Jordan Pate, Cody Simmons, Liana Tindle, Chase Upchurch, Garrett Wadsworth



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Don't worry. They are Good, God-loving People

For more than twelve years now, I have had the privilege and honor of being involved in serving in Hispanic/Latino Ministry in our diocese. When I left Mexico back in 2005; the idea of ministry with immigrants in the US was burning deep in my heart and was my biggest motivator. Hearing stories over the years about my own Mexican father's journey coming to the US in the mid 70's really stirred something in me and I found myself wanting to be a missionary in the United States.

In all these years I've come to meet the most resilient, hardworking and wonderful people from various Latin American countries. The vast majority of them happen to be very devout Catholics as well. From farm workers around the Daviess County area, to Latinos in manufacturing jobs in Bowling Green or restaurant workers in Murray. There are an estimated 30,000 immigrants of recent decades residing in Western Kentucky. Unfortunately most of these Hispanic/Latino immigrant brothers and sisters are still undocumented. Some came on temporary visas that they weren't eligible to renew, some have spent years in limbo while in deportation proceedings in immigration court and many had no line to stand in and still don't have any way to get immigration papers. Unless you have close family who are U.S. Citizens over the age of 21 or possibly Permanent Residents or higher education with a job lined up, it's nearly impossible in our current immigration system to come to the U.S. legally, raise your family here and become citizens.

My family and I have come to know, serve, learn from, and grow in deep friendships with immigrant families from all over Western Kentucky. There are so many excellent faith-filled people - not just some of them, but 99.9% of them. We see them contributing to communities at all levels. Some small towns would be already dead economically if it weren't for the presence of recent immigrants. They are the ones that make it possible for my kids to have some veggies to dip in ranch dressing for supper. They are the ones that make sure houses get new roofs put on and don't leak. They are the people that make sure crops around Kentucky get harvested. They're the ones that in coming years will continue to enrich our parishes here and across the United States keeping the Catholic Church alive and thriving.

These are not easy times for immigrants. Given the most recent promises of mass deportations and an increasing hostility towards immigrants and refugees, I worry about families and their children. Hispanic/Latinos themselves are currently extremely worried. Leading up to the elections the Church encouraged each one of us to be Faithful Citizens and to vote. They also encourage each one of us as Catholics to be active throughout the political process at all levels, even after the election. We are asked to defend all life at all stages, to stand up against intrinsic evil which includes racism and to advocate for the least among us. Let's not be silent Catholics but rather people that stand firm against any attitude that alienates and hurts others.

Let us all pray for one another and remember that each one of us - regardless of nationality, language, skin color or religion - all of us are still made in the image and likeness of a loving God.

Chris Gutierrez Director of Hispanic/Latino Ministry



First Friday 24-hour Adoration:

Following the 9:00 am Mass on December 2, we begin the 24 hour adoration until Saturday morning mass at 8:00 am. We are blessed with dedicated adorers for each hour, but can use extra people for some hours. Please call Minnie Nimmo 270-617-0297 or Patsy Whitfill 270-617-2557 to volunteer spending an hour in prayer with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

TEC - WKY Teens Encounter Christ

A workshop for TEC will be held at Gasper River Retreat Center on December 3-4. We hope past TECites and team members will join us for this Renewing the Vision of the Tec Movement in our Diocese. The cost is \$60 but if needed you can apply for a scholarship for \$30. For questions please email wkytec@gmail.com, call Taylor at (270) 562-2132, or go to wkytec.org to apply.

Pray to end abortion: Join other Catholics and those from other faiths that gather each Saturday at 2nd and Market in Louisville from 7:00-8:00 am (EST) to pray for families entering the abortion clinic. Many children have been saved and mothers spared future grief by this prayer action and support. With God, all things are possible! Archbishop Kurtz is known to show up and pray with everyone too!

Matthew 25:36 "I was sick and you cared for me..." Are you being called to be a Communion Minister to the Sick? If you are interested in joining this caring ministry to the sick and administering Holy Communion please contact Deacon Mike 270- 756-0120 or Fr Brian 270-756-2356.



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Advertiser of the week:
O'Reilly's Auto Service
270-756-2147

Thank you for supporting St Romuald Church!



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2016

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Welcome new horizons**

Rise and shine! It can be hard as we move through life to recognize that every moment offers us a chance for a new beginning. As Paul writes to the Romans, "It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed." As Advent begins, a new liturgical year is upon us. Today is the beginning of something new. We have the chance to begin this New Year wide awake to the world around us. Open your eyes and let Christ's Light stream in!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 2:1-5; Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:37-44 (1)*. "You also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Stretch your heart and mind

On the spiritual journey, it can be easy to think that you can figure everything out, that your mind is the only tool you need. On the journey of life, though, you have to engage the heart. Any other way is, according to contemplative author Cynthia Bourgeault, "like trying to play a violin with a saw." Faith stretches far beyond what our minds can comprehend. As you begin this Advent, how might you trust in the glory of God that is coming? May your heart and mind be stretched by the answer that you find!

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 4:2-6; Matthew 8:5-11 (175)*. "For over all, the Lord's glory will be shelter and protection."

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Keep your Christmas presence under wraps

This Advent, try experiencing Christmas in a more gradual way. Instead of jumping into Christmas the day after Thanksgiving, allow the symbols, rich colors, poetry, and music of Advent to wash over you slowly during these weeks. Take time to contemplate the pillars of Advent: Isaiah stoking humanity's longing for the Redeemer, Mary bringing Jesus into history, and John the Baptist urging us to begin a new life. Maybe even put up your Christmas tree later than usual, closer to Christmas Eve. If you experience "the holidays" as an exhausting trial, let Advent calm you. Let its mystery refocus your life and make you hungry for God.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24 (176)*. "From His roots a bud shall blossom."

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30

FEAST OF ANDREW, APOSTLE

Raise up the cross

Tradition says that Saint Andrew died crucified on an "X" shaped cross. Saint Andrew's Cross is best-known for its depiction on the Scottish flag. According to legend, while praying on the eve of battle, King Oengus II promised that if victory was granted, he would name Saint Andrew as the patron saint of Scotland, which is why he is honored on the flag. Pray that Saint Andrew intercedes for victory in our daily struggles.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Romans 10:9-18; Matthew 4:18-22 (684)*. "As he went from there, he saw ... James son of Zebedee and his brother John ... and he called them."

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Pray for a "Day without AIDS"

Since 1988, December 1 has been recognized as World AIDS Day. The following year, the first "Day without Art" was organized. More than 800 arts organizations, museums, and galleries throughout the United States covered works of art and instead displayed information about HIV. Globally there are an estimated 34 million people who have the HIV virus. Since 1984, more than 35 million people have died of HIV or AIDS. Let's remember all those with AIDS-related illnesses, past and present. Let's pray for them and for those who work tirelessly to care for them and to find a cure.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 26:1-6; Matthew 7:21, 24-27 (178)*. "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock."

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2

ADVENT WEEKDAY

Time to be truly free, at last

Legalized slavery was abolished by the end of the 19th century, but sadly it still flourishes underground. Today is the annual commemoration of the United Nation's International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Every year, thousands of poor and defenseless men, women, and children fall into the hands of human traffickers who expose them to sexual exploitation, forced labor, warfare, and even removal of vital organs. Jesus came to set us free; let's do our part to see that the world hears that message loud and clear by working to protect victims of human trafficking.

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

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

MEMORIAL OF FRANCIS XAVIER, PRIEST

Strong beyond their numbers

Saint Francis Xavier was a seasoned missionary who traveled to India, China, and other places in Asia. He is the first Christian missionary to go to Japan. He wrote that the Japanese were the "best people yet discovered." He found them kind and polite, yet the work of evangelization was difficult in Japan. When Saint Francis left two years later, Japan had some 2,000 new Christians. Today the number of Catholics in Japan is still small, representing less than 0.5 percent of the population. Let's remember them today and remember Catholics in all in those places where they represent a small minority.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6-8 (180)*. "As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'"

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