

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Moving from Mourning and Misery

Loving God,
you restore what we have broken.
Amidst our struggles with sin,
guide us in preparing the way;
help us to see your salvation.
Give us courage

to move on from mourning and misery.
We rejoice,
for you have done great things for us.
As you directed the Israelites,
lead us in joy by the light of your glory.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 8, 2024

Led by God in Joy



Today's readings: Baruch 5:1–9; Psalm 126:1–2, 2–3, 4–5, 6; Philippians 1:4–6, 8–11; Luke 3:1–6. The first reading comes from the end of the prophet Baruch's poem of consolation to the Israelites. Though the Israelites have sinned and are in exile, the prophet shares encouraging words, referencing the Israelites' eventual return to Jerusalem. Baruch's words paint a beautiful image of hopefulness and trust in God. Encouraging the Israelites, he tells them to shed their "mourning and misery; / put on the splendor of glory from God forever." He reminds them that they are "wrapped in the cloak of justice from God," and tells them to confidently display "the glory of the eternal name." Indeed, just like the Israelites, we are led by God in joy.

In Luke's Gospel, John the Baptist's call to "prepare the way of the Lord" echoes Isaiah words "that every lofty mountain be made low / and that age-old depths and gorges / be filled to level ground." The text encourages us to meditate on the universality of salvation. How can you take on John the Baptist's challenge to repent for forgiveness with joy? Our reason to rejoice is evident, for as the psalmist sings, "The Lord has done great things for us."

Make an intentional effort this week to join in St. Paul's prayer: may our love increase ever more and more in every way so that we can be ready for the day of Christ.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 9 Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

Luke's Gospel relates that Mary is "greatly troubled" at the angel Gabriel's greeting. The angel attempts to comfort her, telling her not to be afraid and reminding her that "nothing will be impossible for God." Celebrate Mary's courageous response to God's call by spending time in silence, listening to how God may be calling you. Reach out to a conversation partner and share your prayer experience. *Today's readings: Genesis 3:9–15, 20; Psalm 98:1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4; Ephesians 1:3–6, 11–12; Luke 1:26–38.*

Tuesday, December 10 Comfort

Speaking to the Judeans exiled in Babylon, Isaiah tells of the deliverance that is to come. He assures them that flesh might wither and wilt as grass and flowers do, "but the word of our God stands forever." In the Gospel, we hear that the Lord values each one of his followers, and just as a shepherd goes after his sheep, the Father does not want one of his to be lost. *Today's readings: Isaiah 40:1–11; Psalm 96:1–2, 3 and 10ac, 11–12, 13; Matthew 18:12–14.*

Wednesday, December 11 Mercy and Grace

As you light two candles on your Advent wreath, say a prayer in gratitude for the Lord's mercy and graciousness. As the psalm proclaims, he is "slow to anger, abounding in mercy" despite our turning from him. The Lord is always welcoming, for as the Gospel states, he calls out, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened." *Today's readings: Isaiah 40:25–31; Psalm 103:1–2, 3–4, 8, and 10; Matthew 11:28–30.*

Thursday, December 12 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to St. Juan Diego, an indigenous peasant, at Tepeyac Hill in Mexico. Today we celebrate Mary's presence, especially her making herself known to those who are marginalized. On this feast day, pray with Mary's canticle (Luke 1:46–55) and ask for her intercession to help you proclaim the greatness of the Lord. *Today's readings: Zechariah 2:14–17 or Revelation 11:19a, 12:1–6a, 10ab; Judith 13:18bcde, 19; Luke 1:26–38 or Luke 1:39–47.*

Friday, December 13 St. Lucy

St. Lucy, whose name means "light," is the patron saint of the blind. She was tortured and martyred for her dedication to her faith. St. Lucy is often depicted holding a platter with gouged eyeballs. Pray for St. Lucy's intercession today, that you may give sight to those who are hopeless and bring light in the darkness of persecution. *Today's readings: Isaiah 48:17–19; Psalm 1:1–2, 3, 4, and 6; Matthew 11:16–19.*

Saturday, December 14 St. John of the Cross

St. John of the Cross is the patron saint of contemplatives, mystics, and Spanish poets. After being educated by the Augustinians and Jesuits, he joined the Carmelites. St. John of the Cross encountered Teresa of Avila and was attracted to her devotion to prayer and simplicity. After being influenced by her regimented spirituality, he was punished for seeking to restore the Carmelite order. To celebrate St. John of the Cross, learn about the Catholic Church's diverse spiritual traditions. Pray with one that may be unfamiliar to you. *Today's readings: Sirach 48:1–4, 9–11; Psalm 80:2ac, 3b, 15–16, 18–19; Matthew 17:9a, 10–13.*

