

[Online Ministries Home Page](#) | [Daily Reflections](#) | [Online Retreat](#) | [Stations of the Cross](#) | [Practical Spirituality](#) | [Spirituality Links](#)

[Return to the Weekly Guide for Daily Prayer](#) | [Tell a Friend about these Weekly Guides](#)

[Visit the Daily Reflections Each Day This Week](#)

[PDF of this page](#)

The First Week of Advent

Advent and a new liturgical year begins this week with the **First Sunday of Advent**. Jesus tells of the master who leaves his servants in charge while he travels. "Watch, therefore; you do not know when the Lord of the house is coming," As this season of Advent begins, so does our watching and waiting for the Lord. Our lives should be ready at all times.

Wednesday is the **Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle**. Saturday is the Memorial of the great Jesuit, **Saint Francis Xavier** and the 500th anniversary of his birth.

In Advent, we focus on the first reading, which is from **the Prophet Isaiah** this week. These readings are about promises. Isaiah is consoling, building up and preparing his people to have hope. "In the days to come," he says over and over. When the day of promise comes, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again." Even though King David's line, and that of his father, Jesse, are almost wiped out, Isaiah proclaims hope: "On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom." Who would believe even a peace in nature - lion lying down with the lamb? "There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD, as water covers the sea." God's unique ways of favoring the poor, which Mary comes to know and proclaims in her Magnificat, are seen when Isaiah says, "He humbles those in high places, and the lofty city he brings down; He tumbles it to the ground, levels it with the dust." Even Jesus' own statement about his mission is seen in the powerful images Isaiah uses to give us courage and hope: "On that day the deaf shall hear ... the eyes of the blind shall see ... the lowly will ever find joy in the LORD ... " "On the day the LORD binds up the wounds of his people."

The gospels for this first part of Advent are chosen from several gospels. They are meant to match the first readings and to show the promises are fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus brings healing. He raises up the childlike. And Jesus calls and sends the twelve apostles to continue his ministry.

In the **Second Sunday of Advent** we hear Isaiah write of a voice that cries out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the

Daily Prayer This Week

It becomes easy to stay focused during Advent. There are many distractions at this time of the year, we seem to get very busy, and at times have to go to a number of parties and social events. But, the heart of this season is all about expectant hope. So, we begin our Advent journey by giving ourselves some time to reflect this week on how much God promises us.

Each morning, while we are first coming to consciousness, we can focus for just a few moments, to name a desire, to name an emptiness or feeling of anxiety or worry. It is into places just such as these that our Lord came to be with us. So, this week, we can begin to invite our Lord to be Incarnate in our lives, in the places we need him the most.

Our goal this week is to let ourselves feel like those to whom the promises of our God are made. We want to get in touch with ourselves, especially those parts of ourselves that are in need of a Savior. We do this by keeping our focus on the places that feel like a desert, the places that feel like we've been through a war, the places that feel like a lifeless stump. When we have a hard time seeing, we ask for the grace to be able to believe the promise that we shall see. When we seem deaf, we place our trust in the One who assures us that we will hear. And when we feel beaten down and awfully lowly, we turn to the One who promises that we will "find joy in the Lord." And, who among us doesn't have days on which we are aware of various kinds of wounds? On the day of promise, "the Lord binds up the wounds of his people."

As we let these deep realities of our daily, busy lives come into focus and interact with the readings, something wonderful happens. We become more and more aware of our need for God. Very naturally and quite spontaneously, a prayer comes forth from deep within us, which we can say in the smallest moments of our busiest days. "Come, Lord." "Come and save me." "Come and be with me in all of these messy, empty, dry and disordered places in my life." "Come, Lord. I feel my longing for you grow. I feel my hope grow. And, as I place my hope in your promises, Advent begins to come alive in me."

All of this preparation can happen in the simplest

wasteland a highway for our God!" These lines from the prophet are repeated in the **Gospel of Mark** as we are introduced to John the Baptist who prepares the way for Jesus, proclaiming, "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

way, before the first Christmas decoration goes up. And, for each moment of each day that we encounter a place that we desire, that we long for our Lord's coming, we can express our thanksgiving. Each night we might pray:
The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom should I fear?
The LORD is my life's refuge; of whom should I be afraid?" (Ps. 27)

[Send us an e-mail](#)