

Sunday Readings

1 December 2024

Collect

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at his coming,
so that, gathered at his right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly
kingdom.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah 33:14-16

'Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 24:4-5,8-9,10,14

R/. To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

Lord, make me know your ways.
Lord, teach me your paths.
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:
for you are God my saviour. **R/.**

The Lord is good and upright.
He shows the path to those who stray,
He guides the humble in the right path,
He teaches his way to the poor. **R/.**

His ways are faithfulness and love
for those who keep his covenant and law.
The Lord's friendship is for those who revere him;
to them he reveals his covenant. **R/.**



SECOND READING

A reading from the first letter of St Paul
to the Thessalonians

3:12 - 4:2

Brothers and sisters: May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Finally, then, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Ps 84:8

Alleluia, alleluia!
Let us see, O Lord, your mercy
and give us your saving help.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 21:25-28,34-36

The Lord be with you.
And with your Spirit.
A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.
Glory to you, O Lord.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.

'But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer after Communion

May these mysteries, O Lord,
in which we have participated,
profit us, we pray,
for even now, as we walk amid passing things,
you teach us by them to love the things of heaven
and hold fast to what endures.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

First Sunday of Advent

Lectionary Year C

The Word of God

Saint of the Week

Today the season of Advent begins, a journey of spiritual renewal in preparation for Christmas.

Jeremiah speaks with a voice of reassurance, of a day when God comes to fulfil His promises and to provide security for those who wait for Him faithfully. Paul, in the second reading, foretells a day when God will invite us into a joy-filled life with the saints. And in Luke's Gospel passage, Jesus tells us to approach the Day of the Lord by standing tall, lifting our faces toward God because our redemption is at hand. And that is the core message of Advent. We wait for God not with a sense of dread but with lively hope - like expectant parents as they wait to hear their baby's first cry, like wedding guests waiting to glimpse the bride as she comes down the aisle. We wait not for the end of everything but for the beginning of a new day, more beautiful than we could ever have imagined it. Advent is a season to prepare. When we are called to meet the Lord, we don't want to be unfamiliar to Him - or He to us. Much better if we can walk into the presence of a long-time friend. Advent calls us to reflect on that friendship and to foster it, to spend even just a few minutes a day in conversation with Jesus.

Our Christian vocation flows from the mystery of the Incarnation, and Advent is the perfect season to explore its greatness and transcendence. It is the time, par excellence, to prepare our hearts for the unexpected gift of peace.

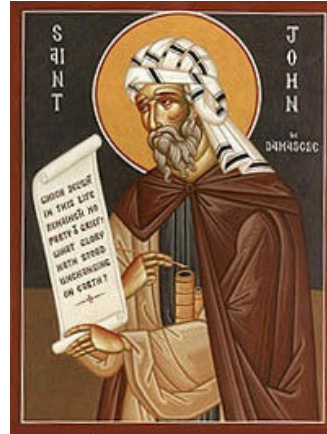
Prayer of the Week

A Prayer for Advent

Advent God,
we journey with you,
to Bethlehem's stable
and a new-born King,
ears attuned
to the song of angels,
eyes alert
for Bethlehem's star.
Forgive us
if on our journey
we are distracted
by the tempting offers
of this world.
Keep our hearts aflame
with the hope
of Christmas,
and the promise
of a Saviour.
Amen.

Wednesday 4 December 2024

**Saint John Damascene, priest,
Doctor of the Church**



St John was born of a Christian family in Damascus in the second half of the seventh century, where his father was a high official under the Umayyad caliph; a post which he inherited. When the Iconoclast movement (seeking to prohibit the veneration of icons) gained acceptance in the Byzantine court, John, being under Muslim rather than Byzantine rule, was able to write effective treatises

attacking Iconoclasm and attacking the emperor for supporting it. At about this time he retired to the monastery of Saint Sabas near Jerusalem, where he became a monk and was ordained. He died in the middle of the eighth century. His name was reviled and execrated by the imperial Iconoclast party even after his death.

His genius was not for original theological development, but for compilation of an encyclopedic character. In fact, the state of full development to which theological thought had been brought by the great Greek writers and councils left him little else than the work of an encyclopedist; and this work he performed in such manner as to merit the gratitude of all succeeding ages. Some consider him the precursor of the Scholastics, whilst others regard him as the first Scholastic, and his "De fide orthodoxa" (Concerning the Orthodox Faith) as the first work of Scholasticism. The Arabians too, owe not a little of the fame of their philosophy to his inspiration. The most important and best known of all his works is that to which the author himself gave the name of "Fountain of Wisdom". This work has always been held in the highest esteem in both the Catholic and Greek Churches. Its merit is not that of originality, for the author asserts, at the end of the second chapter of the "Dialectic", that it is not his purpose to set forth his own views, but rather to collate and epitomize in a single work the opinions of the great ecclesiastical writers who have gone before him. A special interest attaches to it for the reason that it is the first attempt at a summa theologica that has come down to us.

Sometimes known as "the last of the Church Fathers," he was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Leo XIII in 1883.