



Bringing Home the Word

First Sunday of Advent (A)
November 27, 2022

God Is Near

By Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

“Be prepared!” But for what? Since we’re entering the season of Advent, we might think that we’re called to prepare for the birth of Jesus. Advent is certainly the time to prepare for Christmas, but it’s much more than that, for God comes into our lives in many different ways, even today. We see evidence of this when, working together, we rebuild not only cities, as Isaiah describes in the first reading, but relationships in families, parishes, and countries.

Remarkable changes take place in our lives when, as Paul bids us, we

“throw off the works of darkness” (Romans 13:12). God comes to us every day with the power we need to improve ourselves and our world. God often comes quietly in ways so ordinary we might miss them. That is the point of Jesus’ insistence to “stay awake” and “be prepared” (Matthew 24:42, 44).

God certainly came long ago as a human being. That was a one-time-only event. We believe that God will come again at the end. That, too, will happen only once. But God comes every day to help us be our better selves. This is what the Advent readings tell us.

What can we do? How are we to prepare for God’s coming? Today’s readings tell us. We must work for the peace that Isaiah describes; we must throw off the works of darkness as Paul instructs; and we must do as Jesus tells us: stay awake, and be prepared. +

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 2:1–5

In days to come,... / One nation shall not raise the sword against another, / nor shall they train for war again.

Romans 13:11–14

Let us then throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Matthew 24:37–44

[Jesus said,] “So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.”

*God comes every day
to help us be
our better selves.*

A Word from Pope Francis

Keeping watch does not mean to have one’s eyes physically open but to have one’s heart free and facing the right direction, ready to give and to serve...in a concrete sense, being attentive to our neighbors in difficulty, allowing oneself to be called upon by their needs, without waiting for them to ask us for help.

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Have you experienced God’s presence in the goodness of others?
- Have you been a sign of God’s presence to those around you?

The Days Are Coming

By John F. Kavanaugh, SJ

As a child, once the celebration of Thanksgiving was over, I would go to the windows almost every morning, looking for snow. It is one of my earliest memories, a tissue of images held together by feelings that always had something to do with expectancy.

For children of other countries or climates, the prod might not have been Thanksgiving or the thought of snow, but I wouldn't be surprised if the early days of Advent were, for most Christian boys and girls, eager ones. Some children had Advent calendars; others had wreaths decked with candles. Many observed the strangely prophetic feast of St. Nicholas, with its long stockings bulging with many small promises of greater gifts to come.

Songs changed with December. Worldly anxiety combined with hope in "You better watch out...Santa Claus is coming to town." The "March of the Toy Soldiers" made the spine tingle. And church hymns deepened everything: "O come, O come..." "Wake, awake, the night is dying."

Advent reminds us not only of our great need for God but also of the brokenness of the world, mirrored by the brokenness in our hearts. In order for God to more fully enter our lives, let us more fully enter our own.



Consider it a way of extending the great feast of Thanksgiving. Advent can so easily be co-opted by the mania of consumerism, sparked by that greatest shopping spree of the year on the Friday after Thanksgiving, fueled by our deepest spiritual hungers that we suspect could be eased by some magical gift of grace.

If we try to make Thanksgiving stretch all the way through Advent and to the end of the year, we might find that Emmanuel will be "with us" in unexpected ways. Just as Mary's Advent was one of gratitude spoken in the Magnificat, let ours be a time of naming how God has done "great things" in us.

This exercise might help. Starting with the first of December take a

lined eight-by-eleven sheet of paper. They usually have thirty lines. Each day, for each line, write down two items: something in your world you give thanks for and someone in your life you give thanks for. Your Christmas will be different if you do this. Having become more present to your passing days, you may see how God is with you. By the last day of the year, you will have a page of gifts. And as the new year starts, you might, with Mary, "treasure these things" in your heart. +

This article is an excerpt from *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas* by John F. Kavanaugh, SJ, available now from Liguori Publications. Visit Liguori.org to learn more and review our complete list of *Daybreaks* authors, including Mitch and Kathy Finley, Fr. Ron Rolheiser, Sr. Dianne Bergant, Fr. Daniel Horan, and others.



*Lord Jesus, so that the world
may know of your presence
among us, we pray—
be born in us,
be born in our world.*

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 28–
December 3

Monday, Advent Weekday:
Is 4:2–6 / Mt 8:5–11


Tuesday, Advent Weekday:
Is 11:1–10 / Lk 10:21–24

Wednesday, St. Andrew:
Rom 10:9–18 / Mt 4:18–22

Thursday, Advent Weekday:
Is 26:1–6 / Mt 7:21, 24–27

Friday, Advent Weekday:
Is 29:17–24 / Mt 9:27–31

Saturday, St. Francis Xavier:
Is 30:19–21, 23–26 / Mt 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6–8

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