

CELEBRATE SABBATH

First Sunday of Advent

Simplicity means doing things without any double-dealing or manipulation, our intention being focused solely on God.

One of the most joyful traditions of all Christian communities has been celebrating the season of Advent every year. Advent is a time of waiting, of eager longing for the Messiah, for the one who can heal us, save us and make us whole. In waiting, we must await God coming at His time, in His season, in His way. In waiting, we may often wait alone, others may leave, may give up, may not care, may be busy about many things. But we must wait in silence, in solitude, in prayer. We must wait empty, open, poor, hungry, thirsty, longing..... We must make space for the Messiah, because HE COMES.

**Blessed are you God, father of all that is!
In your infinite mercy,
you came to us in our distress and gave us Jesus, your Son,
to be our savior and friend, our brother and redeemer.
We thank you, Father, for the gift of "Advent",
Make it a time of Grace and peace for all of us. Amen.**

Isaiah 2:1-5

Isaiah had a beautiful vision of the Lord's house being established as the highest of all mountains, raised above all hills, to which all nations would come. On this mountain, a sense of brotherhood, harmony and peace would come..... all instruments of destruction would be turned into creative, life-giving instruments, "sword into plowshares.... spears into pruning hooks." From this vision came the call of Isaiah to "walk in the light of the Lord".

Be people of hope! Work for peace and harmony! Walk in the light of the Lord!

Psalms 122

The psalm begins: "I was glad when they said....". Here we have a group of people who fit the saying of Jesus, "where two to three are gathered....". They came to a common decision, "Let us go to the house of the Lord....". Now they have arrived. They look around with excitement, "our feet are actually standing within your gates...". Their whole lives have found a new meaning and purpose as they join the festal procession that preceded the sacrifice, following behind the priests and Levites, as they shout and dance "before the Lord" on the way up to the Altar of Sacrifice. Their faith was not just a "thing" or just a "doctrine". They expressed it in movement, in action, in song, in dance,

in poetry - they clothed the “spiritual” with garments of joy which they could share as a community.

**I rejoiced when I heard them say:
let us go to the house of the Lord.
And now we have set our foot
within your gates, O Jerusalem.**

Romans 13:11-14

Paul encouraged the Christians in Rome to stay awake and alert and live out their commitments to Christ. Deeds of darkness can make us blind and insensitive to the miracles of life around us. So, Paul taught them to learn to live in the light of Christ, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provisions for the desires of the flesh”.

In this excerpt, we also read about Paul’s advices to the community in Rome regarding six different vices that they should strive to overcome. The vices mentioned are destructive to both individual and community. These are the deeds of darkness that Paul speaks of. The followers of Jesus are called to live in His light.

“Let us throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light and conduct ourselves properly as in the day.”

Mathew 24:37-44

Jesus taught his disciples to be watchful, alert and awake...to be prepared. He said to them that no one knew the day or the hour when God would break into their history. The son of man would come when he is least expected.

To live without vigilance, without watchfulness, is an open welcome to disaster, an invitation to trouble! A thief does not send a text message or an email about his visit to our house. He comes unawares. God breaks into our history in His time, not in our time. It is up to us to stay alert, awake, attentive and listening with joyful expectation for His coming whenever that may be.

The attitude that leads to trouble is one that says, “there is plenty of time, there is always tomorrow.”. Tomorrow may never happen. Tomorrow doesn’t belong to us. We only have today, this moment!

So be prepared. Be alert! Stay awake!

Sint of the day, November 27 - Saint Francesco Antonio Fasani and 39 other saints are remembered this day.

Francesco was born Giovanniello Fasani on August 6, 1681 in Lucera, in the Province of Foggia, then part of the Kingdom of Naples. He began his studies at the Conventual friary in his town and there entered the Order, taking the religious name Francesco and Antonio. After his ordination to the priesthood, he taught philosophy to younger friars, served as guardian of his friary, and later became provincial minister. When his term of office ended, Francesco became master of novices and finally pastor in his hometown.

In his various ministries, he was loving, devout, and penitential. He was a sought-after confessor and preacher. One witness at the canonical hearings regarding Francesco's holiness testified, "In his preaching he spoke in a familiar way, filled as he was with the love of God and neighbor; fired by the Spirit, he made use of the word and deed of holy Scripture, stirring his listeners and moving them to do penance." Francesco showed himself a loyal friend of the poor, never hesitating to seek from benefactors what was needed.

At his death in Lucera in 1742, children ran through the streets crying out, "The saint is dead! The saint is dead!" Francesco was canonized in 1986.

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