



Our Parish COMMUNITY

December 1, 2019

First Sunday of Advent (A)

Is 2:1–5

Rom 13:11–14

Mt 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."
MATTHEW 24:44

God Is Near

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 that 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," works of rivalry and jealousy (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 more often than this. 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.

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR *Reflection*

- ★ Where do you see people's goodness that tells us God is near?
- ★ What can you do to make that goodness present to others?



Editor's note: Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA, is pleased to join you at Mass over the next three liturgical years, beginning with today's reflection. A sister of St. Agnes, Sr. Dianne earned a master's degree and a doctorate from Saint Louis University, and honorary degrees and accolades from many organizations. She is professor of biblical studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

Dear Padre,

A eucharistic minister at a parish we were visiting refused my eight-year-old granddaughter Communion from the cup. Her father asked if this was parish policy, and the minister replied, “No, I refuse!” My grandchild receives both species in our home parish. Can a eucharistic minister refuse the Blood of Christ to anyone?

According to the United States Conference of Catholic bishops, “It is the choice of the communicant, not the minister, to receive from the chalice. Children are encouraged to receive Communion under both kinds, provided they are properly instructed and that they are old enough to receive from the chalice” (*Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds*, 46–47). Children who have reached the age of reason—normally about age seven—are usually advised on this matter of reception by their parents or guardians before they step up to the chalice at Mass. In addition, first-Communion instructions provide adequate preparation on the proper and reverent reception of holy Eucharist.

Essentially, children eligible to receive this sacrament are entitled to participate in the same manner as other members of the ecclesial community. “Sacred ministers cannot deny the sacraments to those who seek them at appropriate times, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them” (*Code of Canon Law*, 843). While this canon specifically pertains to ordained ministers, it’s applicable for all ministers at the service of the faithful who have a right to receive holy Communion by reason of their baptism.



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—Fr. Byron Miller, CSSR
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A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

We can ask ourselves: Is this sacrament fulfilled in me? More concretely: Do I just like to be served at the Lord's table or do I get up to serve like the Lord?...And as a Church let us ask ourselves: After receiving Communion many times, have we become people of communion?

—EUCCHARISTIC CONCELEBRATION, APRIL 20, 2018

Calendar

Monday

DECEMBER 2
Advent Weekday
Is 4:2–6
Mt 8:5–11

Tuesday

DECEMBER 3
St. Francis Xavier,
Priest
Is 11:1–10
Lk 10:21–24

Wednesday

DECEMBER 4
Advent Weekday
Is 25:6–10a
Mt 15:29–37

Thursday

DECEMBER 5
Advent Weekday
Is 26:1–6
Mt 7:21, 24–27

Friday

DECEMBER 6
Advent Weekday
Is 29:17–24
Mt 9:27–31

Saturday

DECEMBER 7
St. Ambrose,
Bishop and
Doctor of the Church
Is 30:19–21, 23–26
Mt 9:35–10:1, 5a, 6–8

Sunday

DECEMBER 8
Second Sunday
of Advent
Is 11:1–10
Rom 15:4–9
Mt 3:1–12