

Daily Advent Readings

During the week, let's spend time reflecting on the story of salvation revealed in the Scriptures and prepare our hearts to receive our newborn King.

This Week's Theme: Joy

MONDAY 12.14.20 Psalm 126:1-6

Israel's long history included incredibly low times of misery at the hands of tyrants (notably slavery in Egypt and exile in Babylon). But it also included God's action to deliver them in the Exodus and in the return from exile. Psalm 126 poetically recalled the joy of the times when God lifted them up and prayed that God would again allow them to live in the joy of God's deliverance

TUESDAY 12.15.20 Luke 1:26-38

Mary was a poor teenager from a small town. She had no reason to expect to lead an exceptional life. So when God's angel said, "Rejoice, favored one! God is honoring you," Luke said the words confused her. But with eyes that saw things human eyes could not, God chose her to miraculously bear and give birth to the Messiah all Israel was waiting for.

WEDNESDAY 12.16.20 Luke 1:46-55

In Mary's culture, women were second-class citizens. No one would have greeted this woman of almost no status by calling her "favored one." When Mary sang that God lifts up the lowly, she did so as a living example of that God's actions. No wonder she exulted in God's inversion of human values: "He has pulled the powerful down... and lifted up the lowly." God valued who she really was, no matter what her social status!

THURSDAY 12.17.20 Isaiah 7:1-4, 10-16

Two kings were plotting to attack Judah, and King Ahaz was frightened. The prophet Isaiah told the king that, as a sign from God, a young woman (possibly Isaiah's wife) would give birth to a son. Before the boy came of age (age 13), the plotting kingdoms would lose their power (and they did). Later, this prophecy came to be seen as a sign for the coming Messiah.

FRIDAY 12.18.20 Luke 13:10-17

Few people in Jesus' day could have been lowlier than this woman, crippled for 18 years. On top of the low social and legal status of women in general, and the limitations of her physical disability, most Hebrews at that time understood physical problems as a sign of God's displeasure. When Jesus decisively set her free, he lifted a huge burden from her. No wonder Luke recorded that people "rejoiced at all the extraordinary things he was doing."

SATURDAY 12.19.20 James 2:5-9

James wrote about the all-too-human tendency to show favoritism to wealthy people over the poor, even in a relatively small matter like whom you seat where in church. The apostle was convinced that life in God's Kingdom is about "about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14:17) Advent is about joy—not just the joy of decorations and presents, but the joy of joining in God's work of lifting up all people.