

This Week's Liturgy Calendar.

The Season of Advent. (b)



Sunday 29th November: First Sunday of Advent. (B)

During this Advent, we are confronted again with the question so vital for us – what place are we giving to Christ in our lives? Are we close to him? One thing is certain – he is close to us. We have to become more aware of that presence in our day to day lives.

Monday 30th November Solemnity of St. Andrew.

Normally the Feast of St. Andrew is celebrated on 30th November but this year that date is the First Sunday of Advent which takes precedence.

Andrew was a fisherman and a follower of John the Baptist. He then recognises Jesus as the one of whom John had been speaking so he joins Jesus. He then introduces his brother Peter to Jesus as well. He brought the message of Christ to the Gentiles and is believed to have preached in many parts of the known world. He died on the 'X' shaped cross in Patras. He is the principal patron of Scotland.

Tuesday 1st December: Tuesday in the first week of Advent.

During Advent, we try to get into the spirit of the people of the Old Testament waiting for the expected arrival of the Messiah. Initially we reflect on the prophets, especially Isaiah. He preaches that all are called to believe in God, to worship him, to live according to his plans and laws and so enjoy his peace.

Today Isaiah foretells that one will come from God who will have a spirit of wisdom, insight, integrity, counsel, power, knowledge and fear of the Lord. He will bring great peace. That day, the root of Jesse, Jesus Christ, will stand as a sign to the peoples.

The people are seeing signs but not recognising them. Above all, they have not realised who Jesus is. The prophets had longed for this moment. With people who are receptive to God's gifts, even today, he can do great things.

Wednesday 2nd December: For Isaiah, the sign of messianic times is that through the Messiah, God will give to his people an abundance of food and drink. The symbolism of the great banquet is used to portray eternal happiness and the blessings

which will be part of God's kingdom. Death will be destroyed forever and every tear will be wiped from every cheek.

Jesus foreshadows the land of plenty when he heals the many sick and feeds the multitude in the desert.

Thursday 3rd December: Memorial of St. Francis Xavier.

Francis was born in Spain, joined the Jesuits and was a disciple of St. Ignatius. He then spent most of his time trying to convert people to Christianity. He did this firstly in Europe before setting sail for the east. He worked in Goa, India and in Japan, the first Christian to go there. He died from sickness on one of the islands of Japan in 1522 at the age of forty-six. He was a man of tremendous energy, faith and kindness.

Friday 4th December: Friday in the first week of Advent.

In this season of hope, the word of God gives us a vision of hope. Those who believe in God's presence and action in the world will see salvation. Isaiah makes this promise in the name of God.

In the Gospel, the blind man sees again. When we celebrate the Eucharist, we profess our faith that God, in fact, begins the fulfilment of this promise in Jesus. He has committed himself to the world through Jesus. We need to be healed so that we can accept the message of Christ in all its fullness.

Saturday 5th December: Saturday in first week of Advent.

The Old Testament text promises restoration to God's people after their conversion. The prophet uses various images to bring home to the people the happiness that would be theirs when the day of salvation dawns. God will take pity on his people.

In the Gospel, Jesus will go out to meet us and help us. Today it is his Church which provides that service through its members – reaching out to those who are in need of any kind. Each Christian is a missionary commissioned by Christ to carry on the work of the apostles.

*O Wisdom,
you come forth from the most high,
You fill the universe and hold all things together
In a strong and gentle manner.
O come,
To teach us the way of truth.*

**STAY
AWAKE** 