

*Reflections
from the
St. Cronan Community*

Advent, 2021

The First Week of Advent





First Sunday of Advent

Jer 33, 14-16

1Thes 3, 12-4, 2

November 28, 2021

Lk 21, 25-28.34-36

Do you sometimes feel tied up in knots? Does the climate crisis have you pondering questions concerning who is responsible? What can I as an individual or we as a faith community do in the face of disasters as we have witnessed; extreme temperature fluctuations, raging storms, rising flood waters, drought, wildfires, tornadoes, record heat waves, snowstorms? What is the responsibility of the developed nations who have made the conditions that brought this crisis about have toward the developing nations who are struggling to “catch up” to our wasteful, polluting standard of living? What does this have to do with Advent?

The gospel for the first Sunday of Advent seems to have been written with our present climate crisis in mind!

*“On the earth, nations will be in anguish, distraught at the roaring of the sea, and the waves.
People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the earth.
The powers in the heavens will be shaken.”*

Where is our consolation in all of this? No mention here of a babe in swaddling clothes in a stable to comfort and console us. We are directed to “stand up and raise our heads, to be on guard, to be on the watch. The day I speak of will come upon all who dwell on the face of the earth.” A stern warning so we had better take notice- and an invitation to meet the Son of God, clothed not in swaddling clothes but in power and glory, coming in the midst of our chaos and confusion. What are we to do? Again, an admonition-“Pray constantly for strength. Act! Conduct yourself in a way pleasing to God- learn to make still greater progress. You know the instructions we gave you in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This Advent, let us pray to Our Lady, the one who can undo the knots of our confusion, our desperation, our discouragement, our inability to act. Let us ask her to lead us to her Son- the babe in the stable and the “just shoot who shall do what is right and just in the land, the Lord our Justice.” Ask Mary and Jesus to guide us to justice and to teach us His way.

Sister Janet Kuciejczyk, CSJ

Monday, First Week of Advent

Is 2:1-5

November 29, 2021

Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9

Mt 8:5-11

*“They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks;
One nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again.”*

*“Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof;
only say the word and my servant will be healed.”*

These two familiar passages occur in today’s readings, and echo God’s call for peace among nations and peoples. In the reading, all nations are called to the Mountain of God. In the Gospel, a Centurion proclaims these words to Jesus with the utmost faith that Jesus will heal his servant. Jesus marvels at his faith and declares to his Jewish disciples that all nations are welcome at the banquet in heaven.

So how is it that we are entangled today in so many knots regarding peace among nations and among peoples? In over 2,000 years, we have not moved toward peace, and people seem to be more scornful toward each other. We are not saving our planet from climate destruction, we are not welcoming the stranger at our borders, and we are not living in peace with each other. Rather, there seems to be increasing divisions.

The St. Cronan community works hard to welcome the stranger and respect all of God’s children. We are blessed to be building this banquet on earth. May our Lady, Undoer of Knots, strengthen us in our endeavors and aid us in reaching out ever further.

Diane Gozdzialski

Feast of St. Andrew, Apostle

Rom 10:9-18

Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11

November 30, 2021

Mt 4:18-22

In the Company of Jesus

The Apostle Andrew gives us a lesson in contemporary discipleship by teaching us to follow Jesus; to speak enthusiastically about Jesus to those we meet; and especially to cultivate an everlasting relationship with Jesus.

Andrew, the first Apostle called by Jesus, was a fisherman and the brother of Simon Peter. A follower of John the Baptist, Andrew recognized Jesus as the Messiah when John baptized Our Lord in the Jordan River, and he introduced his brother Simon Peter to Jesus. The two brothers continued as fishermen until Jesus called them as Apostles (Mk 4:18).

Andrew did not belong to the inner circle of the Apostles, but when he is mentioned, he is instrumental in bringing others to meet Jesus. For example, before Jesus feeds the Five Thousand, it is Andrew who says “Here is a boy who has five barley loaves and two fish...” (Jn 6:8).

Although Andrew may not have been as outgoing and dynamic as his brother Simon Peter, he was a courageous man who spent his life traveling to bring the good news of Christ to those who sat in darkness. We hear little of his being a great preacher and orator, and it may be that he best operated on a one-on-one basis, telling about his Lord in conversation. (The Twelve, C. Bernard Ruffin)

It may be that I also best operate on a one-on-one basis as a fisher of men.

David Dickey



Wednesday, 1st Week of Advent

Is 25:6-10a

December 1, 2021

Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

Mt 15:29-37



Recently, a young person confronted me: “If heaven is so great, why don’t we all just try to die?”

I was startled by the question, to say the least. Taken aback, I stumbled through a combination of theology and screening for suicidal ideation, feeling unprepared for both.

Today’s readings brought me back to that moment. On Isaiah’s heavenly mountain, God wipes the tears from our eyes, destroys death, and provides a feast of food and wine. My young friend’s question doesn’t seem so irrational in light of this description of heaven’s grandeur. It’s tough to pass up that kind of offer!

But then Jesus had to go and complicate it.

Today’s Gospel isn’t about heaven, but the here and now. Jesus goes to an *earthly* mountain and starts healing people and feeding them a feast. But he doesn’t break out his divine powers right away – first, he asks the disciples to feed them. In combination with his teaching on the sheep and the goats, there’s a pretty clear message that we are also called to act, not just worship his divinity and yearn for heaven. Rather, we can go to the mountain both to pray (Matthew 14:23) and to act.

When our hearts yearn for heaven, we can follow Jesus’ example and strengthen our spirits by sharing a meal and some “choice wine” together (or sparkling grape juice, in the case of my young friend) – either at the Eucharist or within our pandemic-safe circles of friends and family.

It’s easy to look to the sky and yearn for the ease of eternity, especially when our eyes are full of tears. But we are called to follow in Jesus’ footsteps, meeting the needs of the people around us – whether that’s a family member, coworker, a stranger on the street, and – perhaps most difficult of all – giving ourselves that same compassion.

Jessica Mayo

Thursday, 1st Week of Advent

Is 26:1-6

December 2, 2021

Ps 118:1 and 8-9, 19-21, 25-27a

Mt 7:21, 24-27

Trust in the LORD forever!

For the LORD is an eternal Rock.

*Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them
will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.*

The theme of both of today’s readings is on God as rock. I love the emphasis on “hope” during this time of year. “Hope” is what comforts and provides purpose. “Hope” is what sustains me when I’m full of anxiety and worry.

Help me trust in you, God, when I am worried and stressed. Help me to know that you have me and are holding me when I’m struggling to know what to do next. Remind me to breathe and to allow you to hold me. You are my rock, my stronghold, my salvation. Of whom or what should I be afraid?

Ann Loida

Memorial of St. Francis Xavier, Priest December 3 2021

Is 29:17-24

Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14

Mt 9:27-31

“The Lord is my light and my salvation, of whom (or what) shall I be afraid.”

As I write this reflection this year, I find myself grieving. In the past two weeks I had a cousin die, followed by his mother only thirteen days later. My aunt had become a mother to me, and a grandmother to my children, following the death of my own mother in 2003. It is from this place then, that the psalmist's words jump out at me.

I am also moved by the story of Jesus healing the blind. In my life, I too have lived many years blind to resources and gifts which have always surrounded me. As the result of this blindness, I have found myself struggling in the face of adversity. I used alcohol and drugs to numb emotional pain. Even after I made the decision to stop using chemicals, I found myself lashing out at others at times, and paralyzed by fear and anxiety at other times. Real relationship with others was nearly impossible.

Thirty-two years ago, I started a process to lift my blindness. Unlike the blindmen in the gospel however, my eyes have opened slowly, but steadily. I do not believe I am finished opening to new realities and growth, as I recognize there are still many areas of my life which need improving. But I have found that when I focus on the relationship with God within me. I never have to face any situation or feeling alone. I have this tremendous resource from which I can draw strength, courage and wisdom. I begin to see all that God has placed around me and feel all the love that God has for me.

And when I remember this, I can draw on this relationship and face my grief, sadness and worry. I have God...of whom should I be afraid.

Kevin Doyle

Saturday, 1st Week of Advent

December 4, 2021

Is 30:19-21, 23-26

Mt 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

Today's readings expound on God's gifts to us. Isaiah tells the Israelites that God will answer their cries with an abundance of bread and water, rain and wheat, light and healing. Matthew speaks of Jesus teaching and healing, and sending his disciples out to do the same. However, the phrase that struck me in the gospel was "his heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd." I sometimes struggle with this image. It puts me in the position of being a "sheep", someone who goes with the crowd, and blindly follows their "leader". We even use the word "sheeple" to describe those who don't think for themselves. But I can certainly identify with feeling abandoned. Have any of us not felt let down at some point in our life? Our leaders have not lived up to their promises; even friends and family may not have been there for us in a time of need. What can we do when we are lost and hopeless? We can turn to our one and only true shepherd - God. God is the only truth worth following, not blindly, but with our eyes and hearts wide open. When we can do this, we will be blessed with God's abundance of grace and love, healing and light.

Laura Krueger