



## ST JOSEPH'S ADVENT REFLECTIONS - AT HOME

If you missed our parish mini-retreat you can find all the resources here. Spend a little time taking in the meaning of Advent before Christmas comes

## Opening/gathering Song - Christ Circle Round us

**click on the link**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phz-EhIh3Wg&list=RDphz-EhIh3Wg&start\\_radio=1&t=220](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phz-EhIh3Wg&list=RDphz-EhIh3Wg&start_radio=1&t=220)

Welcome to this reflection focused on the Sunday gospels of Advent. We will visit the themes of the four Sundays of Advent by looking at images and listening to stories or commentaries that accompany each picture. Each section will be accompanied by an Advent song.

About the images. We will be looking at four paintings. One is a piece of abstract art and the others are more conventional religious paintings. Your preference for each of the pieces will be personal to you. You may love some of them or none of them. You may find some challenging to engage with. That's OK, that is how art works. If you really don't like looking at the images feel free to close your eyes and just listen to the commentary imagining your own version of the image.

You can do this reflection all in one piece or you can engage a section or two at a time. You can do this alone or with your family -it's your choice. If you have an Advent wreath or four candles at home you might like to light one each time you move to reflect on a different week of Advent.

Let us begin in prayer - in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit AMEN

## **song 1 - Awake to the Day**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKRphZOLUuo>

### **Prayer 1**

All-powerful God, as we enter this holy season of Advent, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever. ~AMEN.

### **read the gospel from the first Sunday of Advent**

#### **Luke 21:25-28,34-36**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars; on earth nations in agony, bewildered by the clamour of the ocean and its waves; men dying of fear as they await what menaces the world, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand erect, hold your heads high, because your liberation is near at hand.

'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life, and that day will be sprung on you suddenly, like a trap. For it will come down on every living man on the face of the earth. Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.'

**watch this short reflection on the gospel if you prefer you can close your eyes and listen to the commentary imagining the image for yourself.**

**Wassily Kandinsky, "The Last Judgment," 1912**

**click on the link**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXISdDxBRiQ>**

**take a minute now in silence and notice what has spoken to you  
- music, reading, image? Just notice this for now in a moment of  
silence before moving on to week 2.**

## **The second Sunday of Advent**

### **song 2 - wait for the Lord -Taize**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7GexlvX8HU>

### **Prayer 2**

Let us pray

God of power and mercy open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy so that we may share his wisdom and become one with him when he comes in glory, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. ~AMEN.

### **read the gospel from the second Sunday of Advent**

#### **Luke 3:1-6**

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar's reign, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judaea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the lands of Ituraea and Trachonitis, Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas the word of God came to John son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. He went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the sayings of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

Every valley will be filled in,  
every mountain and hill be laid low,  
winding ways will be straightened  
and rough roads made smooth.

And all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

### **Mattia Preti, "St. John the Baptist Preaching," circa 1665**

**click on the link**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUrn9kBZJM>

**take a minute now in silence and notice what has spoken to you  
- music, reading, image? If you are doing this reflection with  
others, take a couple of minutes after this period of silence to  
share what you noticed.**

## **The Third Sunday of Advent - Gaudete Sunday where St John the Baptist announces the Good News**

### **Song 3 - Maranatha come Lord Jesus**

**click on the link**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7EsmzJnwRg>

### **Prayer 3**

Lord God, may we, your people, who look forward to the birthday of Christ experience the joy of salvation and celebrate that feast with love and thanksgiving. We ask this through Christ our Lord. ~AMEN.

### **read the gospel from the third Sunday of Advent**

#### **Luke 3:10-18**

When all the people asked John, 'What must we do?' he answered, 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same.' There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than your rate.' Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What about us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!'

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.' As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

## **Domenico Ghirlandaio, “Preaching of St. John the Baptist,” 1490**

**click on the link**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ufl-dvRIPxE>**

**take a minute now in silence and notice what has spoken to you - music, reading, image? If you are doing this reflection with others, take a couple of minutes after this period of silence to share what you noticed. What is John’s message and how might you respond to it this year?**

**The Fourth Sunday of Advent - there is a change of emphasis here and we recognise a clear connection forward to the nativity of Jesus that lies ahead**

### **Song 4 O Mary of Promise**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0y3xhUC4Hg>

### **Prayer 4**

Father, all-powerful God, your eternal Word took flesh on our earth when the Virgin Mary placed her life at the service of your plan. Lift our minds in watchful hope to hear the voice which announces his glory and open our minds to receive the Spirit who prepares us for his coming. We ask this through Christ our Lord. ~AMEN.

### **read the gospel from the fourth Sunday of Advent**

#### **Luke 1:39-44**

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

### **Henry Ossawa Tanner, "The Visitation," 1909–1910**

**click on the link**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G77642eQJm4>**

**take a minute now in silence and notice what has spoken to you  
- what will you be taking away from your Advent reflection? If  
you are doing this reflection with others, take a couple of  
minutes after this period of silence to share what you noticed.**

## **Conclusion**

We hope that this set of reflections has given you a refreshed perspective on the Advent Sunday gospels for this year and perhaps has given you something different to take on into your celebration of Christmas.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
world without end. AMEN

## **Final song - Christ be our Light**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qibAAo0JiEQ>