

# Advent Calendar - 2010

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## Sunday, November 28

• First Sunday of Advent •

*So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.*

—Matthew 24:44

A recorded message: “Sorry I was out when you called. Please leave your name and number.” Will this be my response to the touch of God upon my life? To that totally unexpected moment when I know beyond doubt that God is and that God is in touch with me?

God doesn’t leave messages; God speaks to the heart. May we keep our lines open 24/7.

Isaiah 2:1–5

Psalm 122

Romans 13:11–14

Matthew 24:37–44

## Monday, November 29

*On that day,  
The branch of the Lord will be  
luster and glory,  
and the fruit of the earth will be  
honor and splendor  
for the survivors of Israel.*

—Isaiah 4:2

After the long winter months, the prophet Isaiah speaks of an amazing springtime. Then the trees of the forest that have withstood the frosts and gales will begin to reveal what they truly are. What will be the blossoms and fruits of human life on this planet? Dare we trust this promise that, in God’s hands, the fruits will be beauty and glory, reflecting the image of the Creator, and that the darkest hours we experience are truly cultivating God’s springtime?

Isaiah 4:2–6

Psalm 122

Matthew 8:5–11

## Tuesday, November 30

• St. Andrew, Apostle •

*As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen. He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him.*

—Matthew 4:18–20

Jesus calls these men to become fishers of men because they are already fishers of fish. He calls them to move to a deeper engagement with the gifts and experience they already have. As always, he draws our attention to the real world and circumstances in which we live and work, and he shows us how those circumstances might reflect the glory of God, if we will only follow and trust. We are not all fishermen. What gifts and experience is Jesus calling forth in you? How will you respond?

Romans 10:9–18

Psalm 19

Matthew 4:18–20

## Wednesday, December 1

*[Jesus] ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied. They picked up the fragments left over—seven baskets full.*

—Matthew 15:35–37

What we, in the affluent nations, waste might fill the tables of the poor seven times over, but it will take a miracle to make us see this and act upon it.

Isaiah 25:6–10

Psalm 23

Matthew 15:29–37

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## Thursday, December 2

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.”*

— Matthew 7:21

At a Quaker meeting a visitor breaks the silence to ask his neighbor, “When does the service begin?”

The reply: “As soon as the worship finishes.”

Isaiah 26:1–6

Psalm 118

Matthew 7:21, 24–27

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## Friday, December 3

• St. Francis Xavier, Priest •

*On that day the deaf shall hear  
the words of a book;  
And out of gloom and darkness,  
the eyes of the blind shall see.*

— Isaiah 29:18

When my ears are deafened by the clamor of the world’s distractions, and my eyes are dazzled by its fleeting attractions, God’s promise breaks through: “I will open the ears and the eyes of your heart.”

Isaiah 29:17–24

Psalm 27

Matthew 9:27–31

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## Saturday, December 4

• St. John of Damascus, Priest and Doctor of the Church •

*The light of the moon will be like that of the sun  
and the light of the sun will be seven times greater  
like the light of seven days.*

*On the day the Lord binds up the wounds  
of his people,  
he will heal the bruises left by his blows.*

— Isaiah 30:26

In the night of our fears and sorrows, we grope our way through life by the meager candlelight of our wavering faith. But slowly, gradually, those lights are leading us into a new dawn that will outshine them all.

Isaiah 30:19–21, 23–26

Psalm 147

Matthew 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6–8

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## Sunday, December 5

• Second Sunday of Advent •

*There shall be no harm or ruin on all my  
holy mountain;  
for the earth shall be filled with knowledge  
of the Lord,  
as water covers the sea.*

— Isaiah 11:9

If I truly could know my enemies, I would understand them. If I truly could understand them, I would be able to forgive them. And if I can forgive them, I can no longer cause them harm. The tide of God’s love will wash clean the messy shoreline of my heart.

Isaiah 11:1–10

Psalm 72

Romans 15:4–9

Matthew 3:1–12

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## Monday, December 6

*Kindness and truth shall meet;  
justice and peace shall kiss.  
Truth will spring out of the earth,  
and justice shall look down from heaven.*

—Psalm 85:11–12

The coming of God's reign is not so much about obeying a command as it is about surrendering to an embrace. In that embrace, miracles happen.

Isaiah 35:1–10  
Psalm 85  
Luke 5:17–26

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## Tuesday, December 7

- St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church •

*A voice cries out:  
In the desert prepare the way of the Lord!  
Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our  
God!*

—Isaiah 40:3

I have my own ideas about where God's highway should be routed in my life: it should take in all the best bits and my achievements and successes. God has other ideas. God's way leads right into and through my wilderness, my mess, my chaos and my failures.

Isaiah 40:1–11  
Psalm 96  
Matthew 18:12–14

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## Wednesday, December 8

- The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary •

*And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."*

—Luke 1:35

In God the inconceivable becomes a reality, but only if we are willing to allow our shallow ego-selves to be eclipsed by the overshadowing mystery of the Holy Spirit, in whose power all things are possible. May the grace of this Holy Spirit overshadow all our world's strivings, so that we might truly become the holy people God created us to be.

Genesis 3:9–15, 20  
Psalm 98  
Ephesians 1:3–6, 11–12  
Luke 1:26–38

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## Thursday, December 9

- St. Juan Diego, Hermit •

*I am the Lord, your God,  
who grasp your right hand;  
It is I who say to you, "Fear not,  
I will help you."*

—Isaiah 41:13

When I am floundering on the mountainside of life, I don't need a map or a guidebook. I need someone who takes me by the hand, guides me through the rocks and gullies, and gives me the courage to keep walking.

Isaiah 41:13–20  
Psalm 145  
Matthew 11:11–15



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## Friday, December 10

*Thus says the Lord, your redeemer,  
the Holy One of Israel:  
I, the Lord, your God,  
teach you what is for your good,  
and lead you on the way you should go.*

— Isaiah 48:17

There will be many others who claim to lead us, and often they will wear the disguise of authority. May we have the grace of a discerning heart to know what is of God and what is not.

Isaiah 48:17–19  
Psalm 1  
Matthew 11:16–19

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## Saturday, December 11

*I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they pleased. So also will the Son of Man suffer at their hands.*

— Matthew 17:12

The voice of prophecy is alive in the twenty-first century, warning us that God is present in the ones we mistreat.

Can we recognize it? Dare we hear it?

How will we respond?

Sirach 48:1–4, 9–11  
Psalm 80  
Matthew 17:9a, 10–13

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## Sunday, December 12

• Third Sunday of Advent • Our Lady of Guadalupe •

*The Lord gives sight to the blind;  
the Lord raises up those who are bowed down.  
The Lord loves the just;  
the Lord protects strangers.*

— Psalm 146:8–9

The teacher who helps a child solve a problem; the teenager who stops to share a word and a sandwich with a homeless person; the activist who insists on justice for the asylum seeker; the neighbor who looks out for the latchkey kids on the block—they are all reflecting the glory of the Lord.

Isaiah 35:1–6, 10  
Psalm 146  
James 5:7–10  
Matthew 11:2–11

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## Monday, December 13

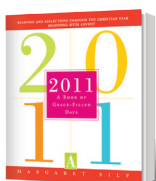
• St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr •

*I see him, though not now;  
I behold him, though not near:  
A star shall advance from Jacob,  
and a staff shall rise from Israel.*

— Numbers 24:17

The writer and Nobel Prize winner André Gide reminds us that “ideals are like stars: we can never reach them, but we can use them to help us plot our course.” The star from Jacob will be forever beyond our reach, yet it will dwell within us always, guiding our every step.

Numbers 24:2–7; 15–17  
Psalm 25  
Matthew 21:23–27



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## Tuesday, December 14

• St. John of the Cross,  
Priest and Doctor of the Church •

*I will leave as a remnant in your midst  
a people humble and lowly,  
Who shall take refuge in the name of the Lord.*

—Zephaniah 3:12

Even when we feel that hardly anyone is left who knows or loves God, who reaches out to the suffering or speaks out for justice—even then, God is nurturing a core of faithfulness and love. Do we believe this? Will we look for it?

Zephaniah 3:1–2, 9–13  
Psalm 34  
Matthew 21:28–32

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## Wednesday, December 15

*Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me.*

—Luke 7:22–23

How do we keep the faith? Not so much, it seems, by assenting to a set of doctrines but rather by living the way Jesus lived, doing the things Jesus did, and trusting the Father whom Jesus trusted.

Isaiah 45:6–8, 18, 21–25  
Psalm 85  
Luke 7:18–23

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## Thursday, December 16

*Enlarge the space for your tent,  
spread out your tent cloths unsparingly;  
lengthen your ropes and make firm your stakes.*

—Isaiah 54:2

When we expand our hearts and minds as the prophet Isaiah urges us to do, we will find that our world includes many people who previously have been excluded.

Jesus' tent knew no limits. It welcomed everyone, especially those whom the "system" excluded.

Isaiah 54:1–10  
Psalm 30  
Luke 7:24–30

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## Friday, December 17

*In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed;  
all the nations shall proclaim his happiness.*

—Psalm 72:17

As we approach the Christmas season, let us take just a moment today to listen to the sound of perfect harmony. It needs two voices. The first voice is that of God, who from the very beginning has poured forth blessing on all the peoples of the earth and will never cease to do so. The second voice is that of God's creation, echoing the blessing by living in loving relationship with one another and with God. This may sound like a distant dream, but in fact the music of blessing begins right now and right here, every time we set aside our narrow tribalism and relate to one another with love.

Genesis 49:2, 8–10  
Psalm 72  
Matthew 1:1–17



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## Saturday, December 18

*Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord,  
when I will raise up a righteous shoot to David;  
As king he shall reign and govern wisely,  
he shall do what is just and right in the land.*

—Jeremiah 23:5

That shoot will become the root of everything humanity can become, and that root will bear branches, and those branches will bear fruit: the fruit of honesty and integrity.

Each of us is called to be a branch.

Jeremiah 23:5–8  
Psalm 72  
Matthew 1:18–25

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## Sunday, December 19

• Fourth Sunday of Advent •

*The virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall  
name him Emmanuel.*

—Isaiah 7:14

Emmanuel means “God-with-us”: not some distant dream, but a statement of fact that is always true. We could never have grasped this truth until we saw the reality of it, lying in a manger.

Isaiah 7:10–14  
Psalm 24  
Romans 1:1–7  
Matthew 1:18–24

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## Monday, December 20

*Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son  
in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her  
who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible  
for God.*

—Luke 1:36–37

Susan often thought back over her long life as she sat, lonely and forgotten, in the nursing home, day after tedious day. What point has there been in all of it? she wondered. Her days had been fruitless, meaningless. Her life had made no difference.

Then a letter came from a former pupil, thanking Susan for all she had meant to him. Just a sheet of paper—but a spark of life, direct from God, redeeming her barrenness, setting her heart alight with meaning and significance.

Isaiah 7:10–14  
Psalm 24  
Luke 1:26–38

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## Tuesday, December 21

• St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church •

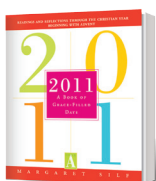
*When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant  
leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth [was] filled with  
the Holy Spirit.*

—Luke 1:41

God's call, however faintly we may perceive it, quivers through our being with a joy and an insistence that shakes us into life.

Take time to remember when you have felt the quiver of God's touch on your life.

Song of Songs 2:8–14 or Zephaniah 3:14–18  
Psalm 33  
Luke 1:39–45



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## Wednesday, December 22

*He has cast down the mighty from their thrones  
and has lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.*

— Luke 1:52–53

God's justice turns our systems upside down.

God's integrity turns our values inside out.

1 Samuel 1:24–28  
1 Samuel 2:1, 4–8  
Luke 1:46–56

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## Thursday, December 23

• St. John of Kanty, Priest •

*[The father] asked for a tablet and wrote, "John is  
his name," and all were amazed. Immediately his  
mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke  
blessing God.*

— Luke 1:63–64

When I do what I know in my heart I must do, then my  
life will speak its own truth.

Malachi 3:1–4, 23–24  
Psalm 25  
Luke 1:57–66

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## Friday, December 24

*You, my child, shall be called prophet of the  
Most High, for you will go before the Lord to  
prepare his way.*

— Luke 1:76

Every day of every life is a call to make choices and de-  
cisions that help to prepare the way of the Lord. Every  
choice to do the more loving thing is a paving stone on  
that way.

2 Samuel 7:1–5, 8–12, 14, 16  
Psalm 89  
Luke 1:67–79

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## Saturday, December 25

• The Nativity of the Lord • Christmas •

*The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom  
a light has shone.*

— Isaiah 9:1

Dazzled by the false lights of our own imagined glory,  
we stumble and fall because in truth our own light is  
darkness. But we find the true light in the darkness of  
God's mystery is where the true light is to be found.

Vigil

Isaiah 62:1–5  
Psalm 89  
Acts 13:16–17, 22–25  
Matthew 1:1–25 or 1:18–25

Midnight

Isaiah 9:1–6  
Psalm 96  
Titus 2:11–14  
Luke 2:1–14

Dawn

Isaiah 62:11–12  
Psalm 97  
Titus 3:4–7  
Luke 2:15–20

Day

Isaiah 52:7–10  
Psalm 98  
Hebrews 1:1–6  
John 1:1–18 or 1:1–5, 9–14

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