



Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Advent (A)
December 7, 2025

Pretend the Dream

Fr. Joseph Juknialis

When I was in college, we had a professor who would often say that if, instead of acting the way we feel, we acted the way we would like to feel, then we would soon begin to feel the way we hoped. Over the years, I've found a fair amount of wisdom in that advice, although I don't always remember to tap into it. I know it's all a kind of pretending, but somehow the pretending does seem to make a difference.

Each year, we make our journey into Christmas with a year's baggage. We come with good memories of fun

times, sun-drenched summers, dappled autumns, vacations, and birthday parties. But we also make our way into this red and green season with a generous share of hurts and pains, failures, and even sins, just because most years are lived that way.

So, during this last month of each year, we play at being happy and pretend that all is good. We sing carols and toast friendships and wish each other blessings and goodness. And, we do it all with an unspoken honesty, knowing full well that life is not always so, but maybe by pretending, and by some freakish twist of godliness, we can find for some short time the harmony once prophesied by Isaiah. Maybe the wolf and the lamb will be kind, and the calf and lion will forget their history, and, for at least one brief shining moment, we will live in harmony with one another. ✝

A Word from Pope Leo XIV

With the light and the strength of the Holy Spirit, let us build a Church founded on God's love, a sign of unity, a missionary Church that opens its arms to the world, proclaims the Word, allows itself to be made "restless" by history, and becomes a leaven of harmony for humanity.

HOMILY, ROME, MAY 18, 2025



Sunday Readings

Isaiah 11:1-10

He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide fairly for the land's afflicted.

Romans 15:4-9

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to think in harmony with one another, in keeping with Christ Jesus.

Matthew 3:1-12

[John the Baptist said,] "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."



If we acted the way we would like to feel, then we would soon begin to feel the way we hoped.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Is it right to act nicer than I feel?
- Have I ever had the experience of feeling better because of my actions?



New Life in a New World

Mark G. Boyer

Go, Isaiah 'twas foretold it, / This Rose I have in mind,
With Mary we behold it, / The Virgin Mother kind.
To show God's love a right, / She bore to us a Savior,
When half spent was the night.

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming," Verse 2

*In this new world,
the way of life will
be different.*

John the Baptist is the prophet who prepares the way for Jesus with fiery homilies about repentance. Like a lone voice in the middle of the desert that few are able to hear, John challenges religious authorities to demonstrate that they have changed their ways; otherwise, like non-producing fruit trees, they will be cut down. The One who breaks the fetters of sin will separate the wheat from the chaff in preparation for the arrival of his Father's kingdom.

The One who is coming is Isaiah's shoot from Jesse's stump that has blossomed from the Virgin Mary's womb. He will display God's love not in a culturally sappy manner of hugs and kisses, but with a peace and knowledge of the Lord that brings no harm or ruin on God's holy mountain.

In this new world, the way of life will be different. The wolf will no longer appear in sheep's clothing to trick the lamb. The lion will no longer stalk the calf. Bears and cows will live as next-door neighbors in peace. The man who will reign will be guided by the Lord's Spirit, filled with wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, and awe. When he separates chaff from wheat, his guide will be justice, that is, what is due others in faithfulness. In this new kingdom, both Jews and Gentiles who repent will be welcomed. †

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Wisdom from Catholic Update

From "The Origin of Christmas Traditions: A Window to Our Faith"
by Christopher M. Bellitto, PhD

The Nativity scene was first seen in Rome as a fresco in the St. Sebastian Catacomb in the late 300s. In the mid-fifth century, Pope Sixtus III set up an elaborate recreation of the Bethlehem story when he renovated the Basilica of St. Mary Major. The church still claims to have boards from the original manger. Saint Francis of Assisi set up the first living Nativity in the Italian city of Greccio in 1223. Francis used a young girl, a newborn baby boy, and live animals to preach as simply as possible for all to understand the story. He wanted people to see the real conditions under which Jesus was brought into the world—to see what it was like for a newborn living among animals.

Catholic Update—a subscription newsletter published eleven times a year—explores Church tradition and teaching on contemporary topics. For more information, call 800-325-9521 or visit Liguori.org.



Lord Jesus, so that by our
words and our actions we
may point the way to you,
we pray—
Be born in us,
be born in our world.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 8–13

Monday, Immaculate Conception of the
Blessed Virgin Mary: Gn 3:9–15, 20 / Eph
1:3–6, 11–12 / Lk 1:26–38

Tuesday, Advent Weekday:
Is 40:1–11 / Mt 18:12–14

Wednesday, Advent Weekday:
Is 40:25–31 / Mt 11:28–30

Thursday, Advent Weekday:
Is 41:13–20 / Mt 11:11–15

Friday, Our Lady of Guadalupe:
Zec 2:14–17 or Rv 11:19a; 12:1–6a, 10ab /
Lk 1:26–38 or Lk 1:39–47

Saturday, St. Lucy:
Sir 48:1–4, 9–11 / Mt 17:9a, 10–13

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