



Bringing Home the Word

Solemnity of All Saints (A)
November 1, 2020

We Are All Called to Sainthood

By Mary Katharine Deeley

I didn't have a calendar for a long time and prided myself on keeping my schedule and my children's schedule in my head. Then came the week I missed three appointments and realized I could no longer rely on my memory. Now I live by my calendar. Appointments, meetings, and to-do lists are neatly in their appropriate slots, and the calendar is the first thing I look at in the morning and the last thing I see before I leave the office. There isn't a lot of time for anything else. This begs the question: When does being a saint get space in my day?

Sunday Readings

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress.

1 John 3:1-3

Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure.

Matthew 5:1-12a

[Jesus said,] "Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

Saints are so transparent to God that God's grace simply flows through them. And we are all called to sainthood, to holiness, regardless of what we do or who we are in the world. We have the mistaken notion that the saints spent all their time doing religious or spiritual things and that if their schedules were like ours, there would be fewer of them. We couldn't be further from the truth. Saint Paul—when he wasn't planting churches, writing letters, or preaching the Good News—was spending more than a little time in prison. I don't think sainthood was really on his to-do list. Nor did he schedule being holy in between travels. His sainthood came from hearing the voice of God, obeying it, and incorporating it into whatever he was doing.

Shoehorning prayer and study into our schedules may be just what we need, and we must allow God to help us find and become the saint in the midst of each of our lives. +

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A Word from Pope Francis

Christians are called to promote political dialogue, especially where it is threatened and where conflict seems to prevail. Christians are called to restore dignity to politics and to view politics as a lofty service to the common good, not a platform for power.... To be a leader demands thoughtfulness, training, and experience.

—Address to Bishops' Conferences of the European Community, October 28, 2017



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Who are your favorite saints and why?
- How can you put more prayer, religious study, and holiness into your schedule?

Want to Be in That Number?

By Kathleen M. Basi

When I was a child, I had a book about saints that I loved. It was filled with color pictures and heroic, larger-than-life stories. I spent hours trying to decide whether I liked Catherine of Siena better for cutting her hair off and being a nun and all, but Alexandria's picture was prettier.

It was years before I realized most of these people weren't the golden-haired northern Europeans portrayed in my book. It was later still before I realized that by focusing on legends and miracles, I had turned sainthood into something reserved for a select few—something far beyond the reach of an ordinary mortal like me.

These days, I prefer to think of the saints as real people, flawed and fragile, representing every country and culture on earth. Yet for all their diversity, each of them sought exactly what I seek: discernment and courage to walk in the footsteps of Christ in a way that is authentic both to his example and to the time and place in which I live.

Now, my favorite stories speak not of miracles, but of extraordinary courage in ordinary situations—like Elizabeth Ann Seton, who, as an impoverished widow, founded the first parochial school in this country, along with a new order of religious—all while raising her own children.

They speak of deeply practical courage in extraordinary circumstances—like Maximilian Kolbe, who willingly



starved to death in place of a fellow concentration-camp prisoner in Auschwitz. In my opinion, that would be even harder than volunteering for a firing squad, where at least the end would come quickly.

And then there are figures with checkered pasts, like Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton—those who don't have feast days in the Church calendar but whose words and actions have reverberated like an earthquake, reshaping the foundation of my faith.

Real people. Real lives. People stumbling through their world in all its messiness, trying to find the path to holiness amid chaos and to identify their individual purpose for why God placed

them on this earth. Those people give me hope. If they managed to find their purpose, maybe I can, too.

Saints are real people with real lives seeking the discernment and courage to exemplify Christ.

It's no longer enough for me to read a paragraph or two about the legendary exploits of those whose names begin with "Saint." I want to know how the real people behind those legends lived. How they learned to mirror God while surrounded by cranky kids and clueless coworkers and spouses who insist on using dish towels to wipe dirty mouths. Because that is the path I need illuminated. +

PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful for your life of humble service. Give me a humble, willing heart to serve the needs of your people.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 2–7

Monday, All Souls' Day:
Wis 3:1–9 / Rom 5:5–11 / Jn 6:37–40


Tuesday, Weekday:
Phil 2:5–11 / Lk 14:15–24

Wednesday, St. Charles Borromeo:
Phil 2:12–18 / Lk 14:25–33

Thursday, Weekday:
Phil 3:3–8a / Lk 15:1–10

Friday, Weekday:
Phil 3:17–4:1 / Lk 16:1–8

Saturday, Weekday:
Phil 4:10–19 / Lk 16:9–15

Bringing Home
the **Word** 
November 1, 2020

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Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
November 8, 2020

Get Ready

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

As we near the end of the liturgical year and prepare for Advent, the readings get us ready for the Second Coming of Jesus by addressing our own final encounter with him. The Church summarizes the last realities each person must reflect on: death, judgment, heaven, and hell. In short, when we die, we will face personal judgment. If our response has been to return Jesus' love, the reward will be heaven. But if we reject Jesus, the result will be hell.

This should not be a source of anxiety or fear, but rather faith, serenity, and

hopeful confidence. If we are not quite ready, now is the age of mercy, and God's grace abounds for those who seek it. It is a healthy thing to be prepared and wise. All of us know our final encounter with Jesus at the end of life is coming. It would be foolish to ignore it or not maturely reflect on its implications.

Oil is the natural resource mentioned in the Gospel because without the light and warmth that an oil lamp provided, the guests could get lost in the dark or need to abandon the wait because of the cold. As we journey through this life, awaiting the marriage feast of Jesus, our hearts can get dimmed and icy if we are not lit by the oil of love and the warmth of the Spirit. We don't know the day or the hour when Jesus will come take us into the eternal banquet, but we know for sure that day is coming.

The wise guest is the person fueled by the oil of love and ready for any eventuality. As the Boy Scout motto goes—Be Prepared. +

All of us know our final encounter with Jesus is coming. It would be foolish to ignore it.

A Word from Pope Francis

The study of the sacred Scriptures must be a door opened to every believer.... Evangelization demands familiarity with God's word, which calls for dioceses, parishes, and Catholic associations to provide for a serious, ongoing study of the Bible, while encouraging its prayerful individual and communal reading.

—*Evangelii Gaudium*, November 24, 2013



Sunday Readings

Wisdom 6:12-16

Resplendent and unfading is Wisdom, and she is ... found by those who seek her

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 or 4:13-14

If we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

Matthew 25:1-13

[Jesus said,] "Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Am I constantly in contact with the mercy of God so I am always ready?
- How am I living now so that I am always prepared for the final encounter with Jesus?

Translating the Message

By Johan van Parys

My nieces and nephews are great kids—intelligent and kind—and I'm proud to be their uncle. Still, I regret their lack of participation in the life of the Church. From what other parishioners tell me, this is happening all around, not just in my family. Why are we losing so many young people? Why doesn't the Gospel message get through to them?

This issue of the best way to communicate the Gospel can be traced back to the apostles. Think about our Church's beginning—the time of Pentecost. Outside the Upper Room, I imagine great festivity as people from many regions and nations gathered in Jerusalem. Inside the Upper Room, the apostles were hiding, burdened with fear and uncertainty. Then suddenly everything changed. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the apostles overcame their fear and burst into the street. The sight of the apostles, on fire with the Spirit as they spoke about God's marvelous deeds, must have quieted the crowd. Miraculously, everyone was able to understand them despite ethnic differences and linguistic barriers.

The apostles presented the Gospel truth in different languages through various channels.



From Jerusalem, the apostles spread throughout the world proclaiming the Good News to every nation known to humankind. They succeeded because they presented the Gospel truth in different languages through various channels.

Successful missionary activity has always relied on the translation of the one and true message into the vernacular and familiar idioms of the people receiving the message. The failures of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century mission attempts in China were attributed to the Church's refusal to allow a Chinese Catholic rite that would have included "baptismal" pre-Christian theological language and accommodated ancestor worship, which was very dear

to them. On the flip side, the success of the Church's mission in Central Africa has been ascribed to the introduction of a Congolese rite that considers the ethos of Central Africa and allows typical African modes of celebration.

As we preach the Gospel in our current, ever-changing reality, we can do one of two things: turn inward and hide in a romanticized understanding of our perceived glorious past, or find new ways to preach the Gospel. The first option might prove disastrous as the Church continues to crumble. The second, though not easy, offers hope—and the promise of a Church ever new and true.

Let us listen carefully to the spiritual needs of our people, learn to understand and speak their languages, and use their idioms wisely to spread the Good News. Let us pray for the knowledge and courage to do what needs to be done.

Finally, let us pray for the safe return of loved ones whose journeys have led them away from our Church. +

PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Help me to keep awake to the movement of your Spirit in my life.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 9–14

Monday, Dedication of the Lateran Basilica (Rome): Ez 47:1–2, 8–9, 12 / 1 Cor 3:9c–11, 16–17 / Jn 2:13–22


Tuesday, St. Leo the Great: Ti 2:1–8, 11–14 / Lk 17:7–10

Wednesday, St. Martin of Tours: Ti 3:1–7 / Lk 17:11–19

Thursday, St. Josaphat: Phmn 7–20 / Lk 17:20–25

Friday, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini: 2 Jn 4–9 / Lk 17:26–37

Saturday, Weekday: 3 Jn 5–8 / Lk 18:1–8

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Bringing Home the Word

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
November 15, 2020

What's Our ROI?

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The Gospel today encourages good investments. Jesus heaps praise on the good servants who were faithful in small matters and rewarded with the joy of the master. The servant who gets called wicked and lazy is punished, not because he miscalculated a risk but because he feared his master and took no risk at all. He was frozen by the thought that he could lose everything, so he buries the talent and anxiously awaits the master's return. He is wicked, not for investing poorly, but for not investing at all.

Sunday Readings

Proverbs 31:10–13, 19–20, 30–31

Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; / the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. / Acclaim her for the work of her hands.

1 Thessalonians 5:1–6

You yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief at night.

**Matthew 25:14–30
or 25:14–15, 19–21**

[Jesus said,] "It will be as when a man who was going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them."

God has given us all so many talents, and he does so for us to enjoy a grand return on investment (ROI). He wants us to use our talents, work them, develop them, and—at the end of our lives—enjoy showing him the way they have multiplied. Like a loving parent, he knows that much of our happiness is in developing and growing those talents with his grace. Those talents are a sign of his call and an invitation to step out in faith.

Parents, your job is to help your children develop their talents and dreams. A confident, enthusiastic, and risk-taking child is a sign of parents who know the balance of loving discipline, positive motivation, and a healthy distance. Children who feel secure in the love of their parents are willing to venture out and invest their talents, for they know someone will always be there to accompany them and catch them if they fall.

Our loving God is the first to know this and so invites us with this parable to trust, invest, and enjoy the returns. +

*Parents, your job is to
help your children develop
their talents and dreams.*

A Word from Pope Francis

From our own death and from our gift, the life and health of others, sick and suffering, may spring forth, helping to reinforce a culture of help, of giving, of hope, and of life. In the face of the threats against life...society needs these concrete gestures of solidarity and generous love.

—Address to Italian Association for the Donation of Organs, Tissues, and Cells, April 13, 2019



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What are the most important talents I have? Think of virtues, abilities, qualities, time.
- Which talent should I invest in more so I can enjoy the return God wants?

Auditing Racism

By Most Reverend Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

The company that manages our electrical service called our parish one day. The agent said the company would do a free energy audit. The audit would produce a report detailing the ways we could save energy and lower our bill. The company also offered us energy-saving light bulbs, free.

We've been audited many times. Every three to five years diocesan auditors visit for two or three days to review the parish finances to make sure everything adds up. We've been through compliance audits for ethical ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We've had rain, runoff, and wastewater audits. One time, everyone who served at the parish did a time audit. We looked at our daily activities to better understand our priorities and effectiveness in ministry.

An audit is an examination of conscience or review of life. Time is set aside for reflection on a specific area of living. Deep analysis, reflection, and evaluation can bring new insight. In the end, we can accentuate the positives and hopefully address the negatives. A goal is attitudinal and/or behavioral change for the better.

Audits or examinations of conscience are regular parts of Catholic life. So why not a racism audit? Would you or your church community do a racism audit every few years? How do you think you'd do? Right away you might feel defensive and set up obstacles to such a review with statements like: "We've done this,"



"I'm not racist," "It's not a problem here," "That's politics," "The Church apologized for that long ago," and more.

I respectfully wave off all obstacle-creating excuses. For an audit to measure an organization's tolerance for and acceptance of diversity and inclusion, two areas of inquiry are required: individual, and organizational. The audit focuses on the individual or personal because an institution is the sum of its parts, and it also focuses on the organization, because structures and systems—like people—hold and transmit beliefs and values.

Employing the audit does not reveal if a person is or is not racist. You don't pass or fail an audit result. The goal is to measure inclusion—that is, the levels of inclusivity at work in a person or

organization. Inclusion can be measured in a number of areas: values and attitudes, skills and abilities, occupation, and personal features or personality.

A level of bias, inclusivity, and/or exclusivity is at work in all of us whether we are aware of it or not. Bias is often unconscious or automatic. Our willingness to examine our own possible biases is an important step in understanding the roots of stereotypes and prejudice in our Church and in society.

How might the Church change if dioceses and parishes—like many corporations and businesses—hired inclusion officers to perform regular audits of parishes and ministries? Racism, prejudice, and bias in our country aren't going away. Maybe we should add one more audit to the annual list. +

Bias is often unconscious. Our willingness to examine our own possible biases is an important step in understanding the roots of prejudice.



Lord, I am grateful for all your blessings. Help me to use your gifts of love and compassion to rebuild people's lives.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 16–21

Monday, Weekday:

Rv 1:1–4; 2:1–5 / Lk 18:35–43

Tuesday, St. Elizabeth of Hungary:

Rv 3:1–6, 14–22 / Lk 19:1–10

Wednesday, Weekday:

Rv 4:1–11 / Lk 19:11–28

Thursday, Weekday:

Rv 5:1–10 / Lk 19:41–44

Friday, Weekday:

Rv 10:8–11 / Lk 19:45–48

Saturday, Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Rv 11:4–12 / Lk 20:27–40



Bringing Home the Word

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe (A)
November 22, 2020

Actions Matter

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Michelangelo’s amazing painting, *The Last Judgment*, takes up the whole of one wall of the Sistine Chapel. It is a reminder of the dramatic moment of Christ’s Second Coming, when he will judge the living and the dead. The Father has given all authority to the Son (John 5:22). Michelangelo places in the upper register the symbols of Christ’s passion as a way to highlight the instruments of Christ’s victory and ours, as well as to show that it was through his loving sacrifice that he has earned the authority to judge the living and the dead.

Christ comes riding on the clouds with his Mother at his side, head turned

and eyes cast down, as the days of her intercession have come to an end. Our chance to appeal to his mercy has passed. We will stand naked before him, and our actions will be the gown that dresses us for the feast of the Lamb (Matthew 22:11).

Jesus, in his mercy, wants no surprises and personally reveals the material to be covered by this final exam. Today’s passage highlights that our charity and kindness will go a long way toward him recognizing us at the last day. Scripture even goes so far as to say that this “love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8). Those who know his love and spread it with their actions will be preparing themselves for a blessed judgment.

Jesus makes it clear that our faith will also be a theme upon which he will search our hearts. He desires not mere words, but loving listening and the heeding of his will. “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).

This is a great source of consolation for those who love him sincerely, even if imperfectly. +

Jesus wants no surprises and personally reveals the material to be covered by our final exam.

A Word from Pope Francis

The kingdoms of this world at times are sustained by arrogance, rivalries, and oppression; the reign of Christ is a “kingdom of justice, love and peace.” For a Christian, speaking of power and strength means referring to the power of the cross, and the strength of Jesus’ love: a love which remains steadfast and complete.

—Angelus, Solemnity of Christ the King, November 22, 2015



Sunday Readings

Ezekiel 34:11–12, 15–17

I myself will pasture my sheep; I myself will give them rest— oracle of the Lord GOD.

Corinthians 15:20–26, 28

The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Matthew 25:31–46

[Jesus said,] “And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Am I ready for that final exam?
- What should I do today in order to be ready for the loving return of Jesus?

Shaped by the Cross

By Johan van Parys

Every night before going to bed, my parents would make the sign of the cross on each child's forehead and whisper, "May God bless you and keep you." Then we would go to our bedrooms, dip our fingers in the small holy water font, and sign ourselves. I remember asking my parents for their blessing before going on a trip or asking the abbot for his blessing before leaving the abbey. These simple signs have left a lasting impression on me.

The cross was everywhere when I was growing up; even today, we find the cross hanging in churches, schools, homes, offices, and cars and around our necks. The priest blesses people with the sign of the cross. Children are marked at their baptism and adults during the Order of Catechumens with the sign of the cross. Christians are shaped by the cross.

We should always remember the importance of the cross in our Christian journey.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s Christiane Brusselmans, the first woman to earn a doctorate in theology from the Catholic University of Louvain, experimented with an ancient process used to bring adults and families into the Church. Following the Second Vatican Council, her work and that of many others resulted in reinstitution of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)—rites lost during the early



Middle Ages due to the shift from adult to infant baptism.

One remarkable rite that marks this process is the Rite of Welcome, in which we admit those seeking baptism in the Catholic Church to the Order of Catechumens. The most moving moment is when the sign of the cross is drawn on the seekers' heart, hands, feet, and shoulders. I remember her instructing us to use big gestures to ensure recipients felt the weight of the cross, especially on their shoulders. The weight of the cross can indeed be heavy.

Our lives as Christians ought to be modeled after the cross. Each year, tens of thousands of people prepare themselves to join the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil. They stand in a long

tradition rooted in New Testament times. Those who have been baptized in other Christian denominations celebrate the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist. Those not previously baptized celebrate all three sacraments of initiation: baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist.

The sacrament of baptism relates the images of baptismal bath, baptismal burial, and baptismal birth. First, we are washed clean from everything that prevents perfect union with God, who claims us as an adopted child. Second, we are buried with Christ so we may rise with him on the last day. Third, we are birthed into the Church—the Body of Christ. Because of this rich sacramental symbolism, baptismal fonts are sometimes made in the shape of a cross. Catechumens enter on one side to be baptized and exit on the other side.

We should always remember the importance of the cross in our Christian journey. Without explanation, my parents impressed this on me each time they signed me with the cross. +



Lord, I am grateful that you are my gentle shepherd. Show me how to care for your people with the same love and compassion you show me.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 23–28

Monday, Weekday:
Rv 14:1–3, 4b–5 / Lk 21:1–4

Tuesday, St. Andrew Dŭng-Lac and Companion: Rv 14:14–19 / Lk 21:5–11

Wednesday, Weekday:
Rv 15:1–4 / Lk 21:12–19

Thursday, Weekday: Rv 18:1–2, 21–23; 19:1–3, 9a / Lk 21:20–28

Friday, Weekday:
Rv 20:1–4, 11–21:2 / Lk 21:29–33

Saturday, Weekday:
Rv 22:1–7 / Lk 21:34–36



Bringing Home the Word

First Sunday of Advent (B)
November 29, 2020

The Rumble Strips of Advent

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy! The sleepy apostles couldn't keep awake with Jesus and drifted off when he most needed them.

I have only fallen asleep at the wheel once. During college, I worked the morning shift starting at 6 AM. After a late night with little sleep, I sluggishly got into my car. Comfortably driving down the highway at about 5:15 AM, I dozed for a few seconds before awakening to the noise of my tires vibrating on the warning tracks—just in time to straighten the wheel and avoid the cement divider.

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 63:16b–17, 19b; 64:2–7

LORD, you are our father;
we are the clay and you our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

1 Corinthians 1:3–9

God is faithful, and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son.

Mark 13:33–37

[Jesus said,] "May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping."

Advent is like those rumble strips. You don't always need them, they are annoying when you accidentally run over them, but they are very important!

We can get tired, trying to keep our hearts awake and attuned to Jesus. The rhythm of life, the background music of the world, the distractions that fly by us—they all contribute to the danger of a passive heart. Running across Advent is like a wake-up call: "Stay awake! He is almost here."

As in driving, there are many distractions vying for your attention, but you learn to focus on what's important. You survey your surroundings, looking for hazards while keeping your eyes on the road. There are many signs to read, but only certain ones point you where you want to go.

Jesus says to be attentive to the signs; learn to interpret their meaning. Understand them, without being distracted by them. Be vigilant, pray for strength, and stay awake and alert. Thanks be to God for those rumble strips! +

***Advent is like rumble strips.
They are annoying
when you run over them,
but are very important!***

A Word from Pope Francis

Take time, quality time. This means being ready to listen patiently and attentively to everything the other person wants to say....Often the other spouse does not need a solution to his or her problems, but simply to be heard, to feel that someone has acknowledged their pain, their disappointment, their fear, their anger.

—*Amoris Laetitia*, March 19, 2016



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Do I believe there is a limited time to my life on earth?
- Since I do not know when Jesus will arrive, isn't peaceful awareness of his eventual return the smartest attitude?

Wait! Don't Skip Advent

By Kathleen M. Basi

Waiting is a pain in the neck. Throughout history, humanity has steadily progressed toward ways to make our lives faster and easier. We now can access information instantaneously in virtual worlds of this and that and have virtually forgotten that patience is still a virtue. Also falling by the wayside are the key concepts of stillness and reflection.

In short, everything the season of Advent invites us to explore goes against the very grain of today's fast-paced society.

In fact, Advent epitomizes another unpleasant quality: uncertainty. The early days of the Advent season reflect first on the triumphant return of Jesus at some unknown point in the future. Over and over we hear that we don't know the day or the hour. And I'm sure I'm not the only one who squirms in church, wondering if I'm living well enough to escape the "winnowing fans" and "unquenchable fires."

So, let's put this all together: Advent asks us to wait in uncertainty while sitting still so we can reflect on the experience. It's no wonder our culture has chosen to skip Advent altogether. Christmas sounds more certain, immediate, and lots more fun!

The season preceding Christmas is a microcosm of our human condition.



Yet Advent is a microcosm of our human condition. There have been plenty of seasons in my life when I have waited in uncertainty for affirmation or resolution to a problem. So often, I've prayed the "billboard" prayer. You know, what you really want is a billboard on the interstate that says in huge letters: "Hey, you! Yes, you! You've made the right decision! Quit second-guessing yourself!"

I know it sounds ridiculous, but God spoke out of a burning bush, didn't he? Parted the Red Sea? Threw manna down into the desert? When you think about it, a billboard doesn't seem like too much to ask for.

But the reality is that despite all those larger-than-life signposts, even the Israelites didn't get to leave Egypt and waltz straight into the Holy Land with the Messiah at the head of their nation. They had to wander around in the desert for a generation, encountering God, rejecting and accepting him time and again. Even after they got their Promised Land, they had to wait another few thousand years for their Messiah. And when he finally came, he looked so different from what they expected, it was impossible for many to claim him.

Then, as now, God's plan is revealed through processes. Those processes usually take a lot more time than we expect. Yet we can't skip over them, because it's in the uncertainty of the process that we encounter God. If we skip the waiting, we risk missing the point entirely. +

PRAYER

Lord, I have become distracted by the things of this world. Guide my steps and lead me safely back home to you. Help me to respond to the needs of others.

—From *Joyful Meditations for Every Day of Advent and the 12 Days of Christmas*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 30–
December 5

Monday, St. Andrew:
Rom 10:9–18 / Mt 4:18–22


Tuesday, Advent Weekday:
Is 11:1–10 / Lk 10:21–24

Wednesday, Advent Weekday:
Is 25:6–10a / Mt 15:29–37

Thursday, St. Francis Xavier:
Is 26:1–6 / Mt 7:21, 24–27

Friday, Advent Weekday:
Is 29:17–24 / Mt 9:27–31

Saturday, Advent Weekday: Is 30:19–21,
23–26 / Mt 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6–8

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