

The Congregation at Prayer

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer
For the Week of the Second Sunday in Advent
December 4 through December 11, 2022

Catechesis Notes for the Week — Advent Meditations: St. Stephen, Martyr – During the second week of Advent our daily Bible narratives focus upon Jacob’s journey back to the land of promise where he will meet his brother Esau. Over twenty years earlier his brother vowed to kill him, but in the end the mercy of God won the day, and Jacob and Esau were reunited in the Lord’s forgiveness. This week’s advent meditation focuses upon **St. Stephen, the First Martyr** in the New Testament. Normally this feast is celebrated the day after Christmas which brings a sense of sobriety to our Christmas celebration. Since, however, Advent celebrates living by faith in this vale of tears, it is appropriate to celebrate this feast ahead of time. “St. Stephen, “a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5), was one of the Church’s first seven ministers, chosen and ordained after the Apostles. He was called to especially minister to the Greek-speaking Jewish Christian widows who were being neglected (Acts 6:2-5). Their ministry enabled the Apostles to give their full attention to the proclamation of the Gospel to which they were called as direct witnesses of the Lord Jesus’ ministry, death, and resurrection. The central authority of the Office of the Ministry is to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. We see the Seven doing exactly that. Philip, another one of the Seven, catechized and baptized Simon the Sorcerer and the Ethiopian Eunuch. Stephen preached the Gospel in the Synagogue of the Freedmen (the free Hellenized Jewish citizens of the empire). It was this faithful preaching of the Gospel, whereby he demonstrated that Jesus of Nazareth was, in fact, the promised Messiah predicted in the Old Testament, for which Stephen was martyred. During his martyrdom we see a faithful Christian, not only in his preaching, but also in his faithful witness to God’s mercy in Christ as he prays for his enemies, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”

The Order of Meditation and Prayer

Pray and confess out loud as much from the order of meditation and prayer as you are able, or as your family size and ages dictate. Learn by heart the verse, catechism, and hymn of the week.

Theme: We Will See the Son of Man Coming in the Clouds

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Apostles’ Creed

Verse: 1 Timothy 6:8, 10a

Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.
For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.

Psalm 50:1-15 and/or the appointed daily psalms listed below.

Prayer on the Psalm: Lord God, heavenly Father, You have appointed a day in which both the living and the dead shall be judged by the Son of Man; we humbly beseech You, make us diligent in the use of Your Word, and enable us by the grace of Your Holy Spirit to walk before You in fervent faith and all holy obedience, that with constant watchfulness and prayer we may look for, and hasten unto, the Second coming of Your Son, and, being accepted in the Judgment, enter with Him into His eternal kingdom; through the same Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Daily Psalms	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	24	122	33	50	18:1-20	102	90	24
Evening	25, 110	40, 67	85, 91	14, 16	126, 62	130, 16	80, 72	25, 110

Bible Readings for the Week:

	Bible Narrative	Second Reading
Sunday	Advent 2: Signs of the Second Coming—Luke 21:25-36	
Monday	Esau Comes to Meet Jacob—Genesis 32:1-21	John 5:24-30
Tuesday	Jacob Wrestles with God—Genesis 32:22-32	John 5:31-47
Wednesday	Midweek: St. Stephen, Martyr —Acts 6:8—7:2a, 51-60	Matthew 23:34-39
Thursday	Jacob and Esau Meet—Genesis 33:1-11	John 6:1-14
Friday	Jacob Returns to Bethel—Genesis 35:1-15	John 6:15-21
Saturday	Advent 3: Comfort My People—Isaiah 40:1-11	1 Corinthians 4:1-5

The Catechism: The Lord’s Prayer— Fourth Petition

What is the Fourth Petition?

Give us this day our daily bread.

Preschool +

<p><i>What does this mean?</i> God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.</p>	<p>First Grade +</p>
<p><i>What is meant by daily bread?</i> Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.</p>	<p>Second Grade +</p>

Prayers: Catechism Prayers, In Our Prayers at Peace, and the Collect for the Week

Prayers on the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer

Heavenly Father, You generously give daily bread to us and even to all evil people without our prayers. You richly and daily provide us with everything that we need to support us in our body and life. Lead us to realize this, that we might receive our daily bread with thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Heavenly Father, teach us to trust in You for daily bread and, according to Your good and gracious will, give us what we truly need to support us in our body and life, including food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like. All this we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

In Our Prayers this Week (include the petitions below followed by the Lord's Prayer)

Baptismal Anniversaries: Anne Haga, Kent Franklin (12/4), Dennis Burk (12/6), Paul Schneider, Mary Schneider, Thomas Haga (12/7), Cathie Weber (12/8), Dane Petersen (12/9).

Wedding Anniversaries: Brian and Rachel Galles (12/9).

The Sick: Cyndi Ruhnau recovering from hip replacement; Mary Boehringer, suffering the effects of cancer treatment; Bob Rothe, Peyton Locklair, Jamilyn Martin, Kathy Miller, Heather Peters, and Josiah Boehringer in cancer treatment.

Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Lord's Prayer and Morning or Evening Prayer from the Catechism.

Hymn of the Week

"Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding" (stanzas 1 and 4)

345

Looking forward to the Third Sunday in Advent

December 11, 2022

Hymns: 347, 344, 354, 355, 346, 342

Isaiah 40:1-11: "Comfort, yes, comfort My people' says your God. Speak comfort to Jerusalem and cry out to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins." These words of glorious prophecy foretell the consummation of Christ's work through the preaching of the Gospel. By the proclamation of the Gospel the Holy Spirit lays upon our hearts the comfort of the forgiveness of all our sins. This gift of grace is greater than all our sins for it comes from the faithful Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep.

I Corinthians 4:1-5: The Apostle Paul speaks of himself and all ministers of the Gospel as "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." In this section of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, he is encouraging the pastors in Corinth to be faithful to the Word of God in their preaching and in their administration of the Sacraments. They are to be engaged in faithful catechesis, so that the gifts of the Sacraments, called in this section, "the mysteries of grace," might be received faithfully in the congregation. He makes it clear that while the pastors are called to serve the Church, they are nonetheless accountable to Christ who calls them to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments faithfully according to God's Word.

Matthew 11:2-11: John the Baptist didn't have a very long ministry. He had no retirement. He had no pension. He preached for a few years preparing the way for Jesus' coming. He was imprisoned by King Herod Antipas and, shortly after the events of this Gospel reading, his head was cut off and presented to the king's brother's wife Herodias with whom Herod had been in an adulterous marriage. So goes the way of God's faithful prophets in this world. When they preach repentance, uncovering man's sin in order to proclaim to them God's salvation in Christ, they are persecuted and put to death. The imprisonment and death of John the Baptist teaches us that there are more important things in life than happiness and success, namely Christ. He is our Lord and Savior. He is the object of our worship and the focus of our hope. It is Christ alone who leads us by and through His suffering and death to the glory of eternal life with God. By all the things through which we suffer, faith is tried in a furnace, the dross is purged, and we are fitted for the Kingdom of God. This is why the introit for this Sunday is the Word of God from Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"