



Bringing Home the Word

First Sunday of Advent (B)

December 3, 2023

Hurry Up and Wait!

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

We've all had this experience. We rush to get ready...and then we wait: at the doctor's office, for a train, at a restaurant. For what do we hurry up and wait this Sunday? Some might say we are waiting for the birth of Jesus. But today's readings don't say this.

The first reading describes people waiting for relief from the guilt of their sinfulness. Paul talks about waiting for "the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" at the end time (1 Corinthians 1:7). The people in the Gospel are waiting for the return of the householder to settle accounts. There's no waiting for Christmas—yet.

What should we wait for if not for Christmas? Isaiah tells us to hurry up and

change our lives of pettiness, selfishness, and arrogance, and then to wait for the graciousness of God to "rend the heavens and come down" (Isaiah 63:19). Paul tells us to hurry up and embrace "the grace of God bestowed on [us] in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:4), and then to wait for the final revelation of his glory. The Gospel tells us to hurry up, be alert and ready for Christ's return, and then to wait for it to happen.

If we don't prepare ourselves for the coming of God in the reality of our own lives, we might not recognize this salvation when it comes. We're not waiting for an event that happened in the past; we are waiting for the grace of God that is calling us into the future. So, hurry up and wait! †

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."

*The Gospel tells us
to hurry up, be alert and
ready for Christ's return,
and then to wait
for it to happen.*



A Word from Pope Francis

[The Lord] comes every day to visit his people, to visit every man and woman who receives him in the Word, in the Sacraments, in their brothers and sisters....He is at the door to our heart. He knocks. Do you know how to listen to the Lord who knocks, who has come today to visit you...?

ANGELUS, ROME, NOVEMBER 29, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- How patient are you with waiting?
- If waiting is difficult for you, what is one thing you can do to be better at it?

Created in Our Image

Johan van Parys

During the Advent and Christmas seasons, the art gallery at the Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis exhibits nearly 200 crèches from around the world. The composition varies in matter and magnitude. Some are carved in wood or stone, and others are made from scrap materials such as newspapers, bottle caps, or soda cans. Some are made of fired clay either colorfully painted or left to its natural state. One is composed of painted pebbles. Sizes range from miniature to almost life-size.

What is remarkable is that in each of these handmade crèches, individual artists present the familiar story of the birth of Jesus in their own image. Featured are African, American, Asian, Australian, and European versions of



Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Sometimes artists replace the traditional sheep and donkey with local animals: llamas, wart hogs, or lions. In some crèches, instead of the traditional gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, artists include gifts representing their culture, such as monkeys and armadillos, which are presented to Jesus by the Magi of the Amazon.

People from all around the world visit the gallery exhibit and look for a crèche from their native land. There is joy when they find it because it is a validation of their faith and an affirmation of their part in the great story of the Incarnation. Each of us is made in the image of God. And in Jesus, God took on the image of each of us so that we might become like Christ. This is the message of Christmas. †

From *Liguorian*, December 2013



*Lord Jesus, so that we may
be patient in our waiting
and energetic in our service,
we pray—Be born in us,
be born in our world.*

The Redemptorists

Signs of the Season – Part I: Decorations

Paige Byrne Shortal

In our house, Christmas comes gradually. On the First Sunday of Advent, the Advent candles go on the table; the wreath on the door; the Advent calendar on the kitchen wall where we open one door each day. Gradually throughout this all-too-short season appear Christmas books, the outside lights, the angels, nutcrackers, stockings, and, of course, the tree—always a real one that we cut down ourselves.

From the poorest to the richest, folks of every nation, race, and religion decorate their homes to make a day more special. It's about honoring—as in “decorate a general.” And it's about remembering. Each year I remember my friend Jean who gave me the angel ornament with 1975 printed on it. I remember when the children were tiny babies as I hang the “Child's-First-Christmas” ornaments. I remember our oldest son's first Christmas with us. He was ten

when we adopted him and he said in his broken English, “In Guatemala, Santa just sleeps and sleeps.”

Now we welcome our children's spouses and children and many of their friends around the dinner table and the tree. And that is also why we decorate. It's about hospitality.

To all who pass by and see the wreath and the lights and the Christmas tree inside, we say, “Welcome Friend and Stranger: Christmas is observed here.” †



WEEKDAY READINGS

December 4–9

Monday, Advent Weekday:
Is 2:1–5 / Mt 8:5–11


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

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

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

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

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

Bringing Home
the Word 

December 3, 2023

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Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday of Advent (B)

December 10, 2023

Prepare the Way of the Lord

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

The admonition in the title of this reflection is found in the reading from Isaiah and in the Gospel passage. Isaiah describes a long line of exiles returning to Jerusalem after many hard years in Babylon. God leads them back home. In preparation for God's and the people's entry, the way is made clear: "Every valley shall be lifted up...The rugged land shall be a plain" (Isaiah 40:4). The road is repaired, just as we might do if someone important were coming to town. The Gospel writer reinterprets this passage. Instead of repairing an actual roadway, the words of John the Baptist prepare for the entrance of Jesus into his public

ministry. Despite their differences, both passages speak of the "way of the Lord," which is the way of salvation.

The people are told they will get a new start. In the first reading it will be after exile; in the Gospel it is the new ministry of Jesus. Even St. Peter refers to this newness. He calls it "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Peter 3:13). He goes on to explain what this means. It will be existence "in which righteousness dwells." Saint Peter further states that this will come to pass on "the day of the Lord," the day when God's promises will be fulfilled and "all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9-10).

The events described in all three readings unfold because of God's merciful love of all. It is for such a day that we are called to prepare. Are we willing to exert the effort? Are we willing to listen to God's words? †

Sunday Readings

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11

Go up onto a high mountain, /
Zion, herald of good news!

2 Peter 3:8-14

The Lord...is patient with you, not wishing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Mark 1:1-8

"Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way."

***There will be
a new beginning:
new heavens and
a new earth.***



A Word from Pope Francis

Today there is need for people to be witnesses to the mercy and tenderness of God, who spurs the resigned, enlivens the disheartened, ignites the fire of hope....So many situations require our comforting witness. To be joyful, comforting people....We are all called to comfort our brothers and sister.

ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 7, 2014



REFLECTION
QUESTIONS
QUESTIONS
REFLECTION

- Is there a change you need to make?
- Have you asked God for help?

Christmas During WW II

Editor's note: This article appeared in Liguorian in December 1944, when Americans were struggling with issues many face today.

Shopping for Christmas will not be much fun this year. To inject something new into the spirit of Christmas despite the shortage of gifts at hand, we have a few suggestions. First of all, make this Christmas more than ever the season of peace by remembering some of the persons whom, ordinarily, you would not remember at all. For instance, that relative you dislike and who has never remembered you. Those neighboring children who get on your nerves. Your boss, whom everybody in the office calls "an old bear." The man with whom you had a political argument which left you both glaring at one another. Perhaps you could send a card to say in effect, "I'm not holding any grudges. Let's be friends."

Don't forget the value of good books



as Christmas presents. People have been sobered into much reading by war; they have unusual opportunities for it because of the difficulties of travel and other kinds of amusement. Watch the Catholic magazine book lists for suggestions in this line. Help to scatter far and wide the

good books that not only provide pleasure and amusement but help people live wisely and fully.

Lastly, with whatever gift you send to a friend, include a note promising that you will be remembering him or her especially at Christmas Mass. Maybe, that way, somebody who has forgotten will suddenly be brought back to the realization that Christmas is nothing without its spiritual significance and spiritual realities; maybe, even, somebody will be led back to God through your reminder. †



*Lord Jesus, so that we may be witnesses to your presence among us, we pray—
Be born in us,
be born in our world.*

The Redemptorists

Signs of the Season—Part II: Beggars

Paige Byrne Shortal

Beggars had a place in ancient times—it was a kind of profession, albeit a lowly one. Today, except for the pleasant clang of the bell outside stores, many of us encounter beggars only on social media or through the mail.

We used to toss all those beggar letters in the recycle bin, unopened and disregarded. Then a few years ago our family started doing something different. Throughout the weeks of

Advent, we save every appeal letter. After our Sunday family dinner with the Advent wreath candles still lit, we open those letters one by one. Our older children read the letters aloud while I prepare the envelopes and the youngest child affixes the stamps. My husband writes checks to each one. Usually, they're only for five dollars each, sometimes ten or twenty for an effort we want to support in a special way. We say a Hail Mary for each effort.

Children are beset by the world's

problems and feel powerless to do anything about them. They need their adults to show that they care and to take the lead in making some kind of response. Our small donations are but drops in the bucket, but at least for a moment we don't ignore the human suffering that is presented to us. It's worth a few dollars and a little time, rather than simply stepping over the beggar on the sidewalk—or the one in the mailbox. †



WEEKDAY READINGS

December 11–16

Monday, Advent Weekday:

Is 35:1–10 / Lk 5:17–26

Tuesday, 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

Wednesday, St. Lucy:

Is 40:25–31 / Mt 11:28–30

Thursday, St. John of the Cross:

Is 41:13–20 / Mt 11:11–15

Friday, Advent Weekday:

Is 48:17–19 / Mt 11:16–19

Saturday, Advent Weekday:

Sir 48:1–4, 9–11 / Mt 17:9a, 10–13



Bringing Home the Word

Third Sunday of Advent (B)
December 17, 2023

Who Are You?

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

So far, the readings for Sundays in Advent have shown God leading the people into a new way of life—a way of righteousness and loyalty, of honesty and responsibility. Today the readings show the people beginning to see that the accomplishment of this transformation would come through the leadership of one individual. Who might that person be?

The passage from Isaiah describes a prophet, one anointed by God and bringing good news to the poor. When the Baptist appears on the scene in John's Gospel, people wonder if it might be him. He insists he is not the one, nor is he a prophet. Then, as we read in John 1:19, "Who are you?" Recalling the passage from Isaiah read on the First Sunday of

Advent, John tells them he is the one repairing the road, getting it ready for the long-awaited one to arrive. He adds that his baptism is a baptism of repentance. He is readying them to be what Paul describes as "perfectly holy...blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

We now see that these readings are preparing us for salvation. We are now told that such divine graciousness will be inaugurated by an individual, one who has not yet been identified. Will it be a powerful king? A mighty warrior? A spectacular prophet? Those in the time before Christ didn't know. We now know that it will be someone powerful enough to initiate a revolutionary change in the lives of the entire people. Now waiting gets exciting! †

A Word from Pope Francis

Jesus has come to bring joy to all people for all time. It is not just a hopeful joy or a joy postponed until paradise: as if here on earth we are sad but in paradise we will be filled with joy. No! It is not that, but a joy already real and tangible now, because *Jesus himself is our joy*.

ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 14, 2014



Sunday Readings

Isaiah 61:1–2a, 10–11

I will rejoice heartily in the LORD,
my being exults in my God.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing.

John 1:6–8, 19–28

[John the Baptist said,] "I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'"

***John is the one preparing
the road, getting it ready
for the long-awaited one
to arrive.***



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS
REFLECTION

- Can you imagine how surprising Jesus was to those who were waiting for the Messiah?
- What messages from the Gospel are surprising even today?

The Loneliest Children

*Editor's note: This article appeared in Liguorian in December 1955.
Today there are similar efforts, including Prison Fellowship Angel Tree.*

Several years ago, a salesman named Dan Vinson decided that the loneliest people at Christmas must be children whose fathers are in prison.

Since 1943, Mr. Vinson and some volunteer workers have sent out millions of Christmas toys each year which have been donated by businessmen everywhere. The children have never heard of Mr. Vinson, and that is the way he wants it to be. He believes that children want presents from someone they love, so wardens and convicts are contacted, and the imprisoned father is sent a list of toys. He checks the ones he wants, and volunteers package the selections and mail them to the prison, where the father



readdresses the package to his children. Dan Vinson often says, "A man never stands so straight as when he stoops to help a child." †

Better than a Sermon

When Frederick Ozanam, the founder of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, was eighteen, he endured many temptations. One day, in great agony of soul, he entered a church in Paris where he saw an old man devoutly reciting his rosary [and]...knelt behind him. The old man was the scientist André-Marie Ampere, [a founder of the science of classical electromagnetism]. The sight of such faith touched Ozanam deeply. Suddenly prayers and tears welled up in his heart. It was a complete victory over his temptations. "The rosary of Ampere," said Ozanam afterward, "did more for me than all books and sermons put together." †

From *Liguorian*, December 1956

Signs of the Season—Part III: Christmas Cards

Paige Byrne Shortal

Christmas cards are something of a ritual in our home, both the sending and the receiving. Somehow it became a "sin" to open a Christmas card alone. When the mail comes, the cards are set aside, to remain unopened until the next family meal. After dinner, the cards are gathered, and we take turns reading them aloud.

We send a lot of cards. Each year I wonder if we should keep sending a card to a woman who was in my choir twenty years ago, or the high school

classmate, or the teacher who made such a difference. But it's so easy to lose people and I don't want to be the first to let go.

Good news isn't complete until we've shared it with someone. Christmas cards are a cozy, civilized way of telling the story again. We need to tell it. We need to hear it. That God is. That God loves us. That God cares. That God is involved in our world. That the Incarnation Story is really true. And in the midst of the loss and sin and pettiness and fear and all the things that distract us from our one most important task of creating on this earth small colonies of heaven—that nothing is

powerful enough to make the story less true. I need to hear it again. And I need to share it. †



Lord Jesus, so that believers everywhere may embrace the truth you came to reveal, we pray—Be born in us, be born in our world.

The Redemptorists

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 18–23

Monday, Advent Weekday:
Jer 23:5–8 / Mt 1:18–25

Tuesday, Advent Weekday:
Jgs 13:2–7, 24–25a / Lk 1:5–25

Wednesday, Advent Weekday:
Is 7:10–14 / Lk 1:26–38

Thursday, Advent Weekday:


Sg 2:8–14 or Zep 3:14–18a / Lk 1:39–45

Friday, Advent Weekday:

1 Sm 1:24–28 / Lk 1:46–56

Saturday, Advent Weekday:

Mal 3:1–4, 23–24 / Lk 1:57–66

Bringing Home
the Word 

December 17, 2023

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Bringing Home the Word

Fourth Sunday of Advent (B)

December 24, 2023

How Can This Be?

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

The reading from Samuel assures us that the leader we are awaiting will be of the royal house of David. We presume this means personal power and political leadership, and recognition of this from others.

The Gospel turns us in a different direction. In Luke 1:34, Mary asks, “How can this be?” This question can be understood in two different ways. One means: How is it going to happen? The other suggests: You’ve got to be kidding! When told she will bear a child, this virgin asks: How is this going to happen? Her visitor explains the unfolding of an unbelievable event. While stories in pagan religions described how gods took

on human form, such wondrous events supposedly happened in royal families—not in the life of an unassuming girl promised to a modest carpenter. In the Incarnation, a singular historic event, Mary did not say: “You’ve got to be kidding!” She replied: “If that’s what you want, I’m willing.”

Advent readings have traced God leading the people to salvation and a new way of living, to an outline of an individual chosen by God to lead them, to the realization that this leader will be a descendant of David. However, none of this happens as we might expect. Rather, it unfolds in such an unpretentious way that many people did not even realize it was happening. Who could blame anyone for saying: You’ve got to be kidding! But God was not kidding.

Now we are ready for Christmas. †

Sunday Readings

2 Samuel 7:1–5, 8b–12, 14a, 16

The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.

Romans 16:25–27

Now to him who can strengthen you...through Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever.

Luke 1:26–38

Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.”

The salvation story is not what anyone expected.



A Word from Pope Francis

[H]ow often our life is made up of postponements...Today, on the threshold of Christmas, Mary invites us not to postpone, to say “yes”....Every “yes” costs something...but it still costs less than what that courageous “yes” cost her, that prompt “yes”, that “let it be to me according to your word,” which brought us salvation.

ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 20, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Where is God working in your life?
- What is your prayer this Christmas—for yourself and for others?

The Greatest Present

Bishop Bruce Lewandowski, CSsR

Have you ever had the embarrassing experience of showing up without a gift at a gift-exchange Christmas party? “The Little Drummer Boy” reminds us of our awkward and embarrassing empty-handed arrival. In the well-known Christmas carol, he comes to the stable in Bethlehem, sees the Christ Child and is overwhelmed by the solemnity of the moment. Who wouldn’t be with so many angels, shepherds, and kings?

Then the kings place their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh before the King of Kings, and the drummer boy blushes, “I have no gift to bring.” At first, it’s awkward, but then he has a flash of genius: “I have no gift to bring,” he sings, that is, except for me and the beating of my drum: “Rum pum pum pum.” The



little drummer boy understands that his simple playing is enough of a gift for the babe. Showing up is plenty.

Isn’t that what Emmanuel (“God with us”) is all about? God shows up and is present, and there is no greater gift. He’s the

gift that changes the world and us forever. And just as God’s presence in the world is meaningful to us, our presence can change the lives of others because the gift of true presence is greater than any other.

Many people are lonely, a feeling that often intensifies during the Christmas season. Show up. Be truly present in another’s life this Christmas and into the new year. You are anything but empty-handed; your presence is your gift. †

From *Liguorian*, December 2013



*Lord Jesus, so that the world
may know peace and every
mother’s child is safe,
we pray—Be born in us,
be born in our world.*

The Redemptorists

Signs of the Season—Part IV: Wrappings

Paige Byrne Shortal

My friend made gift-wrapping into an art form. When our children were little and there were many packages, Mary would come over and wrap with me. She made it fun. We’d put on Christmas music, and I would prepare the packages and gift tags while she wrapped each beautifully, complete with homemade bows. One year, I even snuck in her gifts to be wrapped—which she finally noticed with mock outrage

and genuine amusement on Christmas morning.

Wrapping gifts is a fitting custom as we celebrate the Incarnation. Jesus did not just come wrapped as a human being—like God in disguise. He fully took on human form. Our wrapping is integral to who we are, but it is not the whole story; the wrapping is only waiting to be opened. Inside the little child is a wise person trying to be heard. Inside the woman an intelligent leader with a vision for a better world. Inside the man a gentle

heart with a longing for peace. Inside the elder a youngster with boundless energy. Inside the homely person a beauty hoping to be discovered. Inside the sinner a saint, longing to be good. Inside the dying person the hope of new life. And inside each person the indwelling of God. The indwelling of God!

That’s what Christmas is all about—the birth of Jesus into our hearts so that we humble believers may be Christ-bearers to this waiting, needy world. Merry Christmas. †



WEEKDAY READINGS

December 25–30

Monday, Nativity of the Lord (Christmas):
Is 52:7–10 / Heb 1:1–6 / Jn 1:1–18 or
1:1–5, 9–14

Tuesday, St. Stephen:
Acts 6:8–10; 7:54–59 / Mt 10:17–22

Wednesday, St. John:
1 Jn 1:1–4 / Jn 20:1a, 2–8

Thursday, Holy Innocents:
1 Jn 1:5–2:2 / Mt 2:13–18

Friday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 2:3–11 / Lk 2:22–35

Saturday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 2:12–17 / Lk 2:36–40



Bringing Home the Word

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (B)

December 31, 2023

Family Values

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Some of the most popular television programs depict family interactions. Unfortunately, many of these families are dysfunctional, and those that are not often appear to be vapid, boring, even unrealistic. Today's readings offer examples of genuine family values and the kind of relationships for which most people yearn.

Sirach describes the tender care that bonds parents and children. First it is the parents who care for the children. Over the years the roles reverse, and adult children care for elderly parents.

Sunday Readings

**Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14 or
Genesis 15:1–6; 21:1–3**

Those who honor their father will have joy in their own children, / and when they pray they are heard.

**Colossians 3:12–21 or
Colossians 3:12–17 or
Hebrews 11:8, 11–12, 17–19**

And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection.

**Luke 2:22–40 or
Luke 2:22, 39–40**

The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.

The family is the basic community, where one first learns the hard lessons of unselfishness and forgiveness. The psalm response also describes a model family. The husband will experience success in his work and enjoy the blessings of family life with his wife and their children. Paul provides a list of values to which family members should commit themselves: “compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another” (Colossians 3:12–13). Finally, the Gospel reading provides a glimpse into the lives of the Holy Family. Here they are—a refugee family with Joseph as the protector.

In a way, these are all “holy families.” Prayer is important in the first reading; fear of the Lord is rewarded in the psalm; Paul calls the people “God’s chosen ones” (Colossians 3:12). This feast is not meant to be only a look into the past at the Holy Family. It is an opportunity for us to look into the present and do our part to make our own families holy. †

***These are family values:
compassion, kindness,
humility, gentleness,
and patience, bearing
with one another and
forgiving one another.***

A Word from Pope Francis

All parents are guardians of their children’s lives, not the owners, and they must help them to grow, to mature.... This is the mission to which the family is directed: to create conditions favorable to the harmonious and full growth of its children, so they may live a good life, worthy of God and constructive for the world.

ANGELUS, ROME, DECEMBER 27, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What already makes your family holy?
- What might make it holier?

Born into the Ordinary

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

After the birth of Christ, we need not look to the extraordinary, the spectacular or the miraculous to find God. God is now found where we live—in our kitchens, at our tables, in our wounds, and in each other's faces.

That is hard to believe and always has been. When Jesus was on earth, virtually no one believed he was the Messiah, precisely because he was so ordinary, so unlike what they imagined God to be. They had expected a superstar, a king, someone who would turn the world rightfully upside down. Preaching meekness and gentleness, Jesus didn't live up to those expectations. In terms of his appearance, Jesus apparently wasn't worth describing. He looked like everyone else. Even after the resurrection, he is mistaken for a gardener, a cook, a traveler.

Things haven't changed much in two thousand years. Seldom does Christ meet expectations. We, like his contemporaries,



are constantly looking beyond the ordinary, beyond the gardener, the cook, and the traveling stranger, to try to find a miraculous Christ. It is for this reason that we fly off to Fatima or Lourdes to see a spot where the Blessed Virgin might have cried but fail to see the significance of the tears shed at our own breakfast table. We are intrigued by a Padre Pio who had the wounds of Christ on his hands but fail to see the wounds of Christ in those suffering around us or in our

own emotional and moral wounds. We pray for visions, but seldom watch a sunset. We marvel at the gift of tongues but are bored listening to babies. We look for Christ everywhere, except in the place where the incarnation took place: our flesh. Love is a thing that happens in ordinary places—in kitchens, at tables, in bedrooms, in workplaces, in families, in the flesh. God abides in us when we abide there. Through the Incarnation, God crawls into ordinary life and invites us to meet him there. †

From *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas*, 2005



*Lord Jesus, so that all families,
and the family of humankind,
may grow in the ways of holiness,
we pray—Be born in us,
be born in our world.*

The Redemptorists

A New Year's Resolution

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

I am a two-time cancer survivor. After the second diagnosis, I was stunned and went home, sat down in prayer, and then wrote my own creed.

*I am going to strive to be productive
for as long as I can.*

*I am going to make every day and every
activity as precious and enjoyable as
possible.*

*I am going to strive to be as gracious,
warm, and charitable as possible.*

*I am going to strive to be healthy as long
as I can.*

*I am going to strive to accept others' love
in a deeper way than I have up to now.*

*I am going to strive to live a more fully
"reconciled" life. No room for past hurts
anymore.*

*I am going to strive to keep my sense of
humor intact.*

*I am going to strive to be as courageous
and brave as I can.*

*I am going to strive, always, to never
look on what I am losing but rather to
look at how wonderful and full my life
has been and is.*

*And I am going to, daily, lay all of this
at God's feet through prayer. Amen.*

Life has never been more precious,
nor more enjoyable. Happy New Year. †

From *Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for
Advent and Christmas*, 2019

WEEKDAY READINGS

January 1–6, 2024

Monday, Mary the Holy Mother of God:
Nm 6:22–27 / Gal 4:4–7 / Lk 2:16–21

Tuesday, Sts. Basil the Great and
Gregory Nazianzen:
1 Jn 2:22–28 / Jn 1:19–28

Wednesday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 2:29–3:6 / Jn 1:29–34

Thursday, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton:
1 Jn 3:7–10 / Jn 1:35–42

Friday, St. John Neumann:
1 Jn 3:11–21 / Jn 1:43–51

Saturday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 5:5–13 / Mk 1:7–11 or
Lk 3:23–38 or 3:23, 31–34, 36, 38