

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2017

### SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

#### No place is God-forsaken

Deserts and wildernesses can be beautiful, but they have an element of danger as well. They're good places to get lost, for one thing, and in them you're vulnerable to forces of nature that are vastly more powerful than you. Sometimes, though, you have to travel through the trackless wastes to get where you want to go, and that's true spiritually as well. To reach the Promised Land, the Israelites had to walk through the desert; to return from exile in Babylon they had to journey back to Jerusalem. John the Baptist called people out to the desert to repent. As you continue your Advent journey, remember that sometimes you have to walk through life's deserted stretches to arrive at the place where God is found.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8 (5).*  
"Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God!"



## MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2017

### MEMORIAL OF DAMASUS I, POPE

#### Good bookkeeping helps

The pontificate of Damasus (366-384) occurred during a stormy time in the early church, with controversies and divisions on all sides. Perhaps Damasus' greatest contribution was his insight that a standardized version of the Bible was desperately needed to clear the air. In 382 he commissioned a highly respected scholar named Jerome to revise the Bible into a more accurate and updated Latin version, working directly from the original Greek and Hebrew. Saint Jerome's monumental effort came to be known as the *Vulgate*, meaning "translated into a native language." Even though Latin long ago stopped being a language of everyday use, the Vulgate still holds an honored position in the church. Be grateful for the Good Book and open it up today.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 5:17-26 (181).* "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?'"

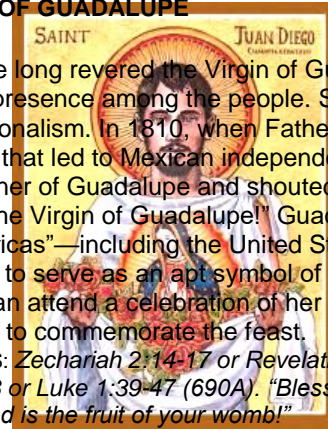
## TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2017

### FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

#### Viva Guadalupe!

Mexican Catholics have long revered the Virgin of Guadalupe as a symbol of God's compassionate presence among the people. She is also an important symbol of Mexican nationalism. In 1810, when Father Miguel Hidalgo initiated the movement that led to Mexican independence, he and his followers carried a banner of Guadalupe and shouted, "Death to bad government, long live the Virgin of Guadalupe!" Guadalupe was proclaimed "Patroness of the Americas"—including the United States—by Pope Pius XII in 1946. She continues to serve as an apt symbol of loving care for all God's people. Perhaps you can attend a celebration of her feast day today, or find your own personal way to commemorate the feast.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Zechariah 2:14-17 or Revelation 11:19a; 12:1-6a, 10ab; Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:39-47 (690A).* "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"



## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2017

### MEMORIAL OF LUCY, VIRGIN, MARTYR

#### Shed some light on the season

Saint Lucy is one of those early saints about whom we know little, though we have some wonderful legendary stories about her that have to do with her name, which means "light." We remember her because she lived—and died—in a time when Christians, to remain faithful, regularly paid the price of their lives. Today we also cross over the midpoint of the Advent season, when we prepare for the coming of the One who is the way, the truth, and the light. Celebrate this saint of light and clear sight by keeping your inner eye open for the Light of the World.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 40:25-31; Matthew 11:28-30 (183).* "Lift up your eyes on high and see."

## THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2017

### MEMORIAL OF JOHN OF THE CROSS, PRIEST, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

#### A closer walk with thee

Saint John of the Cross, a Spanish mystic, was born in 1542. He wrote *The Dark Night of the Soul*, which explores the doubt and spiritual dryness all serious Christians experience on their spiritual journey. Though difficult and painful, the dark night of the soul is an invitation to a deeper closeness with God through greater trust and abandonment to God's will. Saint John wrote, "Oh night that guided me, Oh night more lovely than the dawn." During the holiday season it's not unusual for people to experience doubt and emptiness. Pray to Saint John of the Cross to shore up your faith and give you courage on your way toward God.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 41:13-20; Matthew 11:11-15 (184).* "Among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist."

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2017**

**ADVENT WEEKDAY**

**Stay true to the spirit**

Some folks never have a good word for anybody. This was true in the time of Jesus, when people criticized John the Baptist for fasting, and then spoke badly of Jesus for feasting! Then when Jesus performed healing miracles, some thought he acted by the power of the devil. When he refused a miraculous rescue to save himself from the cross, they said God had abandoned him. Don't listen to the critics—follow the Spirit's prompting.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Isaiah 48:17-19; Matthew 11:16-19 (185).* "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'"

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2017**

**ADVENT WEEKDAY**

**John points the way**

John the Baptist is a prominent personality in Advent. His style is that of the Old Testament prophets, but he points to the New Testament reality of Jesus. He didn't become a follower of Jesus, even though he was the forerunner of the "one who is to come." John's message is delivered in the "fire and brimstone" language of career prophets like Amos or Jeremiah. But his greatest resemblance is to Elijah, whose return was anticipated before the arrival of the messiah. Like John, we, too, "prepare the way" for Jesus to come into the world.

TODAY'S READINGS: *Sirach 48:1-4, 9-11; Matthew 17:9a, 10-13 (186).* "Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him."

**Rosary – Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> – 6:30 PM,  
followed by Advent Evening Prayer at 7:00 PM**

**Sign-up now to keep watch of the Blessed Sacrament –  
New Year's Eve (following 5 PM Mass) through New  
Year's Day (Morning Prayer, 9:30 AM)**



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**TAKE FIVE FOR  
FAITH**

**DAILY RENEWAL FOR BUSY  
CATHOLICS**



**THE  
SECOND WEEK  
OF ADVENT**

***For December 10 –169, 2017***

*Invest just five minutes a day,  
and your faith will deepen and grow  
—a day at a time.*

NOTE: THESE REFLECTIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE EVERY WEEK. YOU MAY PICK UP A PRINTED COPY FROM THESE PLASTIC FOLDERS, READ THEM ON-LINE ON THE OLV WEB PAGE ([WWW.OURLADYOFVICTORY.NET](http://WWW.OURLADYOFVICTORY.NET)), OR HAVE THEM E-MAILED TO YOU EACH WEEK BY SENDING AN A MESSAGE TO [MMATUSZ@OURLADYOFVICTORY.NET](mailto:MMATUSZ@OURLADYOFVICTORY.NET) AND SAYING "ADD ME TO THE TAKE FIVE LIST". LET US KNOW IF YOU'VE REGULARLY USED & ENJOYED THESE REFLECTIONS.

