

First Sunday of Advent, Nov. 30

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer
The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from The Modern English Version Bible

The Collect: Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Isaiah 2:1-5

2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 In the last days,

the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established

on the top of the mountains,

and shall be exalted above the hills,

and all nations shall flow to it.

3 Many people shall go and say,

"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,

to the house of the God of Jacob,

and He will teach us of His ways,

and we will walk in His paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,

and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge among the nations,

and shall rebuke many peoples;

and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,

and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

nor shall they learn war any more.
5 O house of Jacob, come,
and let us walk in the light of the Lord.
Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 122

1 I was glad when they said to me, *
“Let us go to the house of the Lord.”
2 Now our feet are standing *
within your gates, O Jerusalem.
3 Jerusalem is built as a city *
that is at unity with itself;
4 To which the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord, *
the assembly of Israel,
to praise the Name of the Lord.
5 For there are the thrones of judgment, *
the thrones of the house of David.
6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: *
“May they prosper who love you.
7 Peace be within your walls *
and quietness within your towers.
8 For my brethren and companions' sake, *
I pray for your prosperity.
9 Because of the house of the Lord our God, *
I will seek to do you good.”

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14

11 Furthermore, knowing the time, now is the moment to awake from sleep. For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us take off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13 Let us

behave properly, as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in immorality and wickedness, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Matthew 24:36-44

36 "Concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. 37 As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Two will be in the field; one will be taken, and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and the other left.

42 "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord will come. 43 But know this, that if the owner of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also must be ready, for in an hour when you least expect, the Son of Man is coming.

The Gospel of the Lord

On December 3 we celebrate the life of Francis Xavier missionary to the Far East.

Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses

Francis Xavier was one of the great missionaries of the Church. Born in Spain in 1506, he studied locally before taking up university studies in Paris in 1526, receiving a master's degree in 1530. While in Paris he met Ignatius Loyola and, with a small group of companions, they bound themselves together for the service of God on August 15, 1534, the beginning of what would later become the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits. After further theological study, Francis and Ignatius were ordained together in 1537.

As the nuncio to the east for the King of Portugal, John III, Francis went to India, arriving at Goa on the western coast in 1542. He later moved south and traveled as well to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and the Molucca Islands, now Indonesia. For seven years, he labored among the people there, winning many converts to the faith, baptizing, teaching, and trying to ease the suffering of the people. His efforts were not always well received. New Christians were often abused and enslaved and sometimes killed.

In 1549, Francis moved on to the southern region of Japan and immediately set about learning the language and preparing a catechism to support his missionary efforts. In time, he moved north to the imperial capital, Kyoto, and made an effort to see the Mikado, the Japanese emperor. Civil strife and localized resistance made Francis' Japanese efforts difficult, but he came away from the experience with a deep sense of respect for the people and their culture.

After returning to India in 1551, Francis was appointed the Jesuit Provincial for India, but he was not satisfied only to maintain the work already begun. He immediately set out for China, at the time closed to foreigners, in hopes of launching new missionary efforts there. He set up camp near the mouth of the Canton River in August 1552, hoping to secure passage into the country. Later that year he took ill and died, at age forty-six, on December 3, 1552. His remains were later transferred back to Goa, India.

Let us pray: Loving God, you called Francis Xavier to lead many in India and Japan to know Jesus Christ as their Redeemer: Bring us to the new life of glory promised to all who follow in the Way; through the same Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**