

Welcome to *Absolutely Advent* 2025

Absolutely Advent! 2025 provides reflections on the final three principles of Catholic social teaching and on the common good, the goal of Catholic social teaching. The common good calls for individuals and organizations to provide conditions so that everyone can fully and easily reach their fulfillment.

What does Catholic social teaching have to do with Advent?

During Advent, we prepare for the coming of Jesus into this world—at the first Christmas, today, and at the end of time. This Incarnation means Jesus is both God and human. So the principles of Catholic social teaching once affected Jesus as they affect us. He was created in the image and likeness of God; he was born into the family of Joseph and Mary; he lived among the poor and vulnerable; he worked (probably as a carpenter); he saw himself in solidarity with everyone on Earth; and he cared for creation. As both God and human, Jesus shared a vision for the common good that we strive to reach in our world today.

Over these next four weeks, we will look at how we are preparing this world for Jesus. How are we caring for one another—especially the poor and vulnerable—and for God's creation? **Absolutely Advent!** can help. Each day you will:

- Read a Scripture passage from the readings of the day.
- Reflect on each passage with journal questions.
- Engage in activities that make the Scripture come alive.
- Consider teachings of our popes and bishops.
- Reflect on how to put Catholic social teaching into action.

The season of Advent includes four Sundays. Beginning today, you are invited to spend the next four weeks reflecting on your faith in God and the Church. But you will also be challenged to put that faith into action by engaging in activities that, in small, simple ways, will help to create a better world. It's time to live your faith with **Absolutely Advent!**

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

- 1 Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- 2 Call to Family, Community, and Participation
- 3 Rights and Responsibilities
- 4 Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- 5 The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- 6 Solidarity
- 7 Care for God's Creation

To learn more about Catholic social teaching, visit <https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-peace-human-development/catholic-social-teaching>





First Thursday of Advent

DECEMBER 4 ★ SAINT JOHN DAMASCENE

*Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace—
in peace because they trust in you.*

*Trust in the Lord forever,
for in the Lord God
you have an everlasting rock.*

*For he has brought low
the inhabitants of the height;
the lofty city he lays low.*

*He lays it low to the ground,
casts it to the dust.*

*The foot tramples it,
the feet of the poor,
the steps of the needy.*

« ISAIAH 26:3-6 »



These are strange words, aren't they? Isaiah is proclaiming to the people that the power of God is far greater than that of the hostile nations surrounding Judah. Isaiah speaks of social justice, teaching that the oppression of the weak in society is an insult to God's holiness. God will prevail!

Which of the principles of Catholic social teaching best describes Isaiah's message?

Check the statements that are examples of oppression.

- ☐ Emma, a senior citizen, is unable to buy good food AND pay the heating bill in the winter.
- ☐ Josh sits alone in the lunch room every day.
- ☐ Sophia is very skilled at her work, but since she doesn't speak English fluently, she has been passed over time and again for a promotion.
- ☐ Citizens of a Mexican town desperately need work. A U.S. company has built a factory that will employ hundreds, but will pay substandard wages.
- ☐ Warlords are waging war in a country where people have no civil or military defense. People fear leaving their homes because there are random killings.

Describe a form of oppression that you have seen. What will you do about it?

Solidarity

To sustain a lifestyle which excludes others, or to sustain enthusiasm for the selfish ideal, a globalization of indifference has developed. Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility and not our own. The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase.

In the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us. ■ **The Joy of the Gospel, #54**

Can you name five issues that are affecting people in other parts of the world?

Go ahead, give it a try.

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

We have to move from our devotion to independence, through an understanding of interdependence, to a commitment to human solidarity. That challenge must find its realization in the kind of community we build among us. Love implies concern for all—especially the poor—and a continued search for those social and economic structures that permit everyone to share in a community that is a part of a redeemed creation (Rom 8:21-23).

■ **Economic Justice for All, #365**

“AM I MY BROTHER’S KEEPER?” That was Cain’s response when God asked Cain where his brother Abel was. The question “Am I my brother’s keeper?” is still asked today. The principle of Solidarity extends the question beyond our brothers and sisters to our neighbors and to people all around the world. That means paying attention to what is happening to people not only in our own backyards and neighborhoods, but in all areas of the world.

Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk and a very influential Catholic writer, wrote a book titled, *No Man Is an Island*. Referring to a quote by John Donne, the title of the book expresses the point of the Catholic social teaching on Solidarity. No person is an island. We are all connected to one another, and our connections to others are not limited to our friends and family. Each of us is connected to all of humanity, even to those who are halfway around the world. Are you your brother’s or sister’s keeper? You bet you are! We are one body—the Body of Christ!



Second Friday of Advent

DECEMBER 12 ★ OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

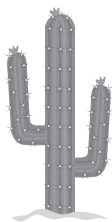
The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." « LUKE 1:30-32 »

On December 12, 1531, Mary appeared as Our Lady of Guadalupe to Juan Diego, one of the poor and oppressed native people of Mexico. She spoke to him in Nahuatl, the language of his people, and told him to ask the bishop to build a church in the place of her appearance. When the bishop asked for proof of this request, Mary sent Juan Diego to the bishop with roses, an uncommon sight in the month of December.

An angel announced the coming of Jesus; a poor and humble man carried Mary's message to a bishop. Both were messengers chosen to carry God's word.

Roses helped Juan Diego to deliver his message to the bishop.

What is the message of each of these flowers? Search online if you need help.



CACTUS

☐

ROSE

☐

DANDELION

☐

LILY

☐

FORGET-ME-NOT

☐

A ENDURANCE

B HAPPINESS

C LOVE

D MEMORIES

E FORGIVENESS

F PURITY

What message from God do you want to carry to the people in your life?



Third Saturday of Advent

DECEMBER 20

*The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it;
for he has founded it on the seas,
and established it on the rivers.
Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,
who do not lift up their souls to what is false,
and do not swear deceitfully.
They will receive blessing from the LORD,
and vindication from the God of their salvation.
Such is the company of those who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.*

« PSALM 24:1-6 »



The Earth Charter is a declaration of principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the twenty-first century. The primary focus of this document is ecology. However, the goals of ecological protection, the elimination of poverty, just economic development, respect for human rights, democracy, and peace are all inseparable. You can learn more about the Earth Charter at earthcharter.org.

Have you ever thought of the earth as a "holy place"? What do you think would change if all the people who live on the earth were to begin to regard it as a holy place?

Psalm 24 and the Earth Charter share a theme.

Which of the principles of Catholic social teaching express this theme?

Name five steps that can be taken to treat the Earth as a holy place. Start with five steps that you can take personally, but look for ways to join with steps being taken in your school and community.

1
2
3
4
5

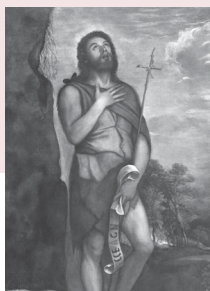


Fourth Tuesday of Advent

DECEMBER 23 ★ SAINT JOHN OF KANTY

A messenger in our time might be someone who sends a text message, makes a phone call, writes for a newspaper or blog, or is a TV news reporter. Whenever there is an announcement, a sign, or news report, people can anticipate or prepare for what is to come—whether the event is a guest for dinner or a tornado sweeping the area.

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. « MALACHI 3:1 »



Many scholars see the “messenger” referred to in this Scripture passage as an angel sent by God. This same description of a messenger is also applied to John the Baptist in Matthew 11:10 and in Mark 1:2. Read and compare all three passages.

Unscramble these words from the passage from Malachi and write the words in the boxes. Letters in the shaded boxes spell out the word that will complete the sentence at the bottom of the page.

KESE

GMCNOI

PEMLTE

EGTHDIL

EDIGNSN

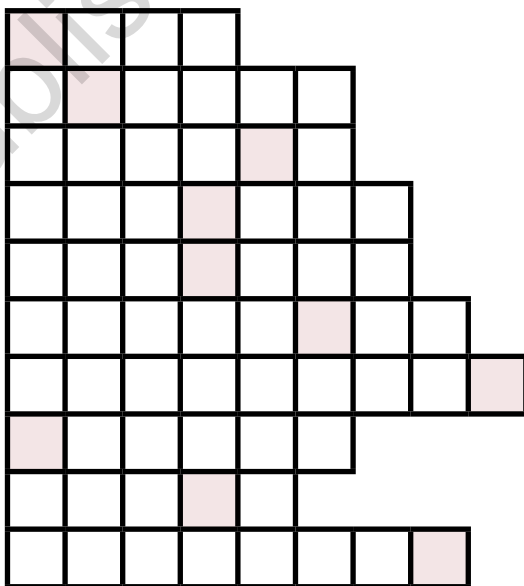
NACONVTE

GENSEMERS

ENDIDE

SHTOS

DYNESUDL



A good messenger can help people to achieve