

Scripture and Feast Day Notes

From Today's Readings

Luke 12:13-31 Jesus tells the parable of a rich fool who plans to build a bigger place to store his surplus grain so he might “eat, drink, and be merry” (v.19) only to die that very night; how much wiser to be “rich toward God” rather than for ourselves! Jesus continues to reorder our priorities: do not be anxious, He advises, about *anything* (12:22-31) - better to seek God’s Kingdom from which all things will flow in abundance as it does for the birds and the flowers of the field.

Discuss/reflect: Jesus could not be clearer: “A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” (12:16) What do you need or like to have around you in great number? How can you come out from under this burden to live the trusting, care-free life to which our Lord invites you?

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 In this first chapter of his letter, St. Paul overflows with praise and thanksgiving for a beloved community. Their exemplary faith, even in suffering, had inspired countless others across the region. *Discuss/reflect: Read verse 3 aloud. Prayerfully turn the questions around: “Does my faith produce work, does love prompt labor, does hope inspire better endurance?”*

Isaiah 36:1-9 The king of Assyria has invaded Judah and from captured Lachish sends a commander to demand Jerusalem’s surrender (an Assyrian wall relief depicting this capture has been excavated at the site). He questions King Hezekiah’s reliance on God. *Discuss/reflect: In v.4, the Assyrian enemy mocks King Hezekiah’s faith: in the face of enemy assault, on what could he possibly base his confidence? What forces assail your faith today? How do you respond?*

Today is the First Sunday of Advent



Unlike the four-week Advent of the Western Church, the season preceding Christmas in the Armenian Church is fifty days, called *Heesnag* (from the word for fifty, *heesoon*). As a period of spiritual preparation, *Heesnag* contains a total of three designated weeks of fasting (aside from the usual Wednesday and Friday fasts). So, unlike Great Lent, it is not a continuous period of this discipline. Bottom line: Our Advent or *Heesnag* is a beautiful time to prepare, body and soul, for the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus

Christ. *Prayerful activity:* Every day, spend five minutes reading some part of the Christmas story: Luke 1:26-56; Luke 2:1-20; Matthew 1:18-25; Matthew 2. Read only a few verses at a time and savor them. Keep reading and repeating in preparation for Christmas.

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