

## ADVENT DAY BY DAY: OPENING DOORS TO JOY

Pudgy fingers curl around a little door, opening to a hidden treasure. Maybe it's a small ornament, an evergreen branch, or a piece of candy. Combining daily satisfaction with longer-building anticipation, each door brings us one day closer to Christmas. *by Kathy Coffey*



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Advent calendars help us enter into the season's delight. With each day's reading and reflection, we advance on a path that culminates with the celebration of Christ's birth. Let's open the first "door."

*Sunday readings vary according to each year's cycle—A, B, or C. Weekday readings are the same every Advent.*

**First Sunday:** A: Is 2:1–5; Rom 13:11–14; Mt 24:37–44  
B: Is 63:16b–17, 19b; 64:2–7; 1 Cor 1:3–9; Mk 13:33–37  
C: Jer 33:14–16; 1 Thes 3:12–4:2; Lk 21:25–28, 34–36

### The Good News Begins

As days shortened, our ancestors feared the sun might never return. We, too, rejoice when Jesus promises tender leaves, signs of spring. We await One so good, so full of compassion, that we stand tall, heads high, eager to see him enfleshed.

**Monday:** A: Is 4:2–6; B and C: Is 2:1–5; A, B, C: Mt 8:5–11

### When Will It Ever Happen?

We hear Isaiah's image of swords turned into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, yet wars still rage. All are one in the Body of Christ, yet still we harm the Christ in the other, his likeness obscured by differences of nationality or religion.



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**Tuesday:** Is 11:1–10; Lk 10:21–24

### Through a Child's Eyes

What a relief when Jesus praises the childlike—not those set in smug certainties but those as wobbly as calves. God became a human infant to see the world with a child's fresh wonder. A

baby has no ego or accomplishment to protect but simply trusts that what is given is good. That's all God wants us to

**Wednesday:** Is 25:6–10a; Mt 15:29–37

### Promise and Reality

Hunger and death are countered by Isaiah's promise. Jesus wiped away tears by curing disease and deformity. His pity for the crowd's hunger led to a feast of loaves and fishes. For people who hadn't eaten in three days, that meal must have tasted like "juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines" (Is 25:6).

**Thursday:** Is 26:1–6; Mt 7:21, 24–27

### Gold at the Bottom of the Barrel

We can identify with Isaiah's condemnation of "those in high places" (26:5). As Jesus taught and lived, we learn more from failure than from success. By losing a little life, we gain a larger one. What have you learned from failure or disappointment?

**Friday:** Is 29:17–24; Mt 9:27–31

### No Instant, Microwave Gratification

"A very little while" (Is 29:17) can seem like an eternity. Our speed-obsessed culture has lost the art of waiting. How many dark days did the blind men endure before they met Jesus? Maybe their long wait, yearning for light, helped them answer, "Yes, Lord" to "Do you believe that I can do this?" (Mt 9:28). For what do you long? Has your long wait ever sweetened the fulfillment of a desire?

**Saturday:** Is 30:19–21, 23–26; Mt 9:35—10:1, 5a, 6–8

### What If?

Imagine a Jesus who condemns, punishes, and predicts fiery damnation. In contrast, consider how people welcome him who teaches, cures, forgives, and has pity. We, too, are sent to serve from a kingdom perspective and a brightness within.

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