

# **MORNING MEDITATION**

## **Saturday, First Week of Advent**

**Gratitude conquers many losses, especially the loss of loved ones.**

### **Isaiah 30:19-21**

Isaiah shared with his people his vision of a time of favor from the Lord: The Lord will make his people prosperous again; he will be gracious to the people who cry out to him; he will provide for the needs of his people; he will show the way that can be trusted; he will heal the wounds of his people....He will not hide from his people. So, be happy, rejoice...you will have no reason to weep!

**Share the vision of Isaiah for a new world order and pray for the establishment of a world of peace, justice, and prosperity for all.**

### **Psalm 147**

**Praise the Lord, for he is good;  
Sing praise to our God, for he is gracious;  
It is fitting to praise him.  
The Lord builds Jerusalem;  
The dispersed of Israel, he gathers.....**

### **Mathew 9:35 – 10:1, 5-8**

This excerpt begins with a summary of what Jesus has been doing: proclaimed good news, taught the values of the kingdom, and healed the sick. Jesus looked at the crowd with compassion. He saw a rich harvest and the need for laborers to gather in the harvest. The spiritual leaders, at the time of Jesus, saw sinners to be condemned, Gentiles who do not follow the law, tax gatherers who were traitors to the nation, etc. But Jesus saw a rich harvest.... people to be gathered in and not kept out or destroyed.

**Look beyond what you see! Be positive, optimistic about you and the world around you! See the goodness of God everywhere and in all people!**

Jesus sent out his disciples, an extraordinary mixture of very ordinary men with the most profound message: “The Kingdom of God is at hand”. They were sent to bring good news, heal the sick.... share the gift they had received freely and joyfully.

**Bring the good news of Jesus to someone today.....share your gifts with others.**

**Saint of the day, December 4 - St. John Damascene and 19 other saints are remembered this day.**

John was a Byzantine monk and priest, born and raised in Damascus around the year 675 or 676. He received a classical and theological education, and followed his father in a government position under the Arabs. After a few years, he resigned and went to the Monastery of Saint Sabas near Jerusalem and spent most of his life in this Monastery.

Eastern Orthodox Christian traditions and Eastern Catholic traditions have been particularly shaped by his insights. Among Eastern Christians, St. John is best known for his defense of Christian sacred art, particularly in the form of icons. While the churches of Rome and Constantinople were still united during St. John's life, the Byzantine Emperor Leo III broke radically from the ancient tradition of the church, charging that the veneration of Christian icons was a form of idolatry.

St. John began publicly opposing the emperor's command against sacred images in a series of writings. His argument was that Christians did not actually worship images, but rather, through them they worshiped God, and honored the memory of the saints and that by taking an incarnate physical form, Christ had given warrant to the Church's depiction of him in images.

He is famous for his treatise, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, a summary of the Greek Fathers, of which he became the last. He is known as a poet, one of the two greatest of the Eastern Church, the other being Romanus the Melodist. His devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and his sermons on her feasts are well known. He died at his monastery, Mar Saba, near Jerusalem on December 4, 749.

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