

Hello St. James Sunday School Families:

Wishing you a joyful Christmas and a healthy, happy New Year!

There will be NO Sunday School Zoom gathering this Sunday, December 27.

We will resume our class on **January 3, 2021.**

Please join the congregation in prayer through [www.stjamesevanston.org](http://www.stjamesevanston.org) or through FaceBook.

Following are reflections on the scripture readings for this Sunday.

Looking forward to seeing everyone on January 3rd.

Greg Burns, Superintendent

Debbie DerAsadourian

+++++

Scripture and Feast Day Notes for December 27

From Sunday's Readings

### **Luke 19:12-28**

In the parable of the ten minas, Jesus tells of a nobleman who travels to a distant land to be appointed king. Many of his own people openly and heatedly resist this appointment. He asks some of his servants to invest money for him in his absence. Upon his triumphant return, he rewards those whose investments made a profit and condemns the man who "played it safe" and buried the money for safekeeping.

**Discuss/reflect:** There are many echoes of Jesus' life in this parable, but important for us is how he evaluates his servants' work. What might the money represent? Do you use the gifts God has given you, even taking bold risks, to enhance his presence and purpose in the world? Why is it so bad to bury them for safekeeping?

### **Hebrews 7:11-25**

Expounding on the priesthood of Jesus, the epistle writer declares him the ultimate High Priest in the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4) rather than the imperfect Levitical line of Aaron. With a new and final priest, one who is capable of saving "completely those who come to God through him" (v.25) comes a new and all-fulfilling Covenant!

**Discuss/reflect:** In what ways might you consider your life an act of worship? How might you imagine Jesus as the celebrant priest?

### **Isaiah 41: 4-14**

While other people go to great lengths to make false gods for themselves (Isaiah almost humorously describes the teamwork of cheerleaders and craftsmen that diligently do so), God pledges to provide true strength and renewal to the people He so lovingly chose.

***Discuss/reflect:*** Read verse 13 over and over, emphasizing different words and phrases as you pause and consider the message. There's a lot there! A God who speaks to us, holds our hand, reassures us, helps us, never leaves our side.

### **January 2 is the Feast of St. Ephrem the Syrian**

St. Ephrem was born in Nisibis c.306 and raised by Christian parents. A protégé of Bishop James of Nisibis, he was ordained and served zealously in local ministry (once saving famine-plagued Edessans from starvation through his tireless efforts). When Nisibis was lost to the Persians in 363, Ephrem moved with many others to Edessa, then the center of Syrian Christianity. He lived only another decade, during which he wrote prolifically, producing a vast body of influential work: Biblical commentaries, apologetic treatises, philosophical works, and a great number of hymns and poems. His poetry was so highly esteemed that he has been cited as "the only poet-theologian to rank alongside Dante." Armenians deeply revere St. Ephrem for his character and his writings. There are many volumes of his work translated from the Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic) into Armenian.

*Department of Christian Education/Diocese of the Armenian Church of America  
(Eastern)*

*elisea@armeniandioces*