



# Living ADVENT

## FAITH CONVERSATIONS The First Week of Advent

### SUNDAY GOSPEL: LUKE 21: 25-28, 34-36

*Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy...and that day catch you by surprise...*

### ADULT REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK

This week's theme is a call to consciousness and attentiveness. Life can be so full that we don't reflect on our daily activities, experiences, relationships, or reactions. Advent is time earmarked for pausing. Difficult when Christmas preparations are ramping up, but what is Christmas about? Presents, concerts, having the house perfect - or preparing our hearts to celebrate the coming of Jesus? How does he come to us? How will we know he's come to us? Let's take this week to reflect.

### CONVERSATION & PRAYER STARTERS

#### SUNDAY

What is Advent? (It is a time of preparing for Christmas. It comes from a word that means "coming.") When we know someone is coming, how do we prepare? For whose coming are we preparing?

#### MONDAY

How does our culture prepare for Christmas? Is this about preparing for Jesus' coming? What would help us prepare for Jesus' coming?

#### TUESDAY

It sure is dark before we light our candle - and what a difference the one flame makes! What "darkness" do we experience in life? Why do you think Jesus called himself Light? Why do we need his coming?

#### WEDNESDAY

What does it mean that Jesus is coming at Christmas? He was born in Bethlehem a long time ago, so why are we preparing now?

#### THURSDAY

Does Jesus come to us on other days, not just Christmas? When? How? How can we be more aware of this?

#### FRIDAY

How has Jesus come to you today? If Jesus comes to us every day, how does that change how we work, play, treat each other, etc.? What could help our family build the habit of reflecting more, of being more aware of Jesus' coming - even after Advent?

#### SATURDAY

As Catholics we believe Jesus will come again - at the end of our own lives, but also at the end of the world. How does this make you feel? Why? How does Advent help us prepare for this coming?

### WEEK 1 PRAYER

Dear Jesus, thank you for coming to us. Please help us to be reflective and watch for you in our lives each day, especially as we prepare for Christmas. Amen.





# Living ADVENT

## FAITH CONVERSATIONS The Second Week of Advent

### SUNDAY GOSPEL: LUKE 3:1-6

*Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.*

### ADULT REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK

This week, the theme of our Sunday readings calls us to prepare for Jesus' coming. While there's overlap from last week, this is another facet: first, consciousness, and now active preparation. Oh, we're usually active alright this time of year! But don't be fooled. What if the active part was actually about quieting ourselves and practicing an interior posture to receive? A letting go, so that God himself can actively prepare the way, his way, in our hearts. and through us, to the world?

### CONVERSATION & PRAYER STARTERS

#### SUNDAY

What kinds of things do we prepare for? What actions are involved? What "in-actions" get us ready? (resting, clearing our minds to focus, listening, etc.)

#### MONDAY

Preparation is gradual. Do you like the process or do you wish you could get right to the "event"? How does the outcome, or your experience of the "event" depend on your preparation beforehand?

#### TUESDAY

Sit in the dark a minute. What does it make you think and feel? We often think of darkness as something scary, lonely, and to be avoided. When is it helpful? What can we learn from it? Jesus is the Light, but we can also find him when in darkness.

#### WEDNESDAY

Wise preparation starts with the end in mind. What is the "end goal" of Advent? Of life? How does this guide our preparations?

#### THURSDAY

In Sunday's 2nd reading, St. Paul speaks of preparing for Jesus' 2nd coming "confident that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it." Have you thought about "preparation" not so much as your work, but rather God's work in you, to help you to become who He made you to be? How can we do this?

#### FRIDAY

In week 1 we talked about God's coming to us each day, but often, we don't notice him. What mountains need leveling so we can see him - less pride, noise, fear? What gorges need filling so we can welcome him - more mercy, trust, kindness? How can we better recognize and prepare for his coming to us each day?

#### SATURDAY

God always works in/for the individual, but in the context of a people, a community. His coming is not just for us, but for the whole world. How can we prepare the way for his coming into the lives of those around us — those who know him and those who don't?

### WEEK 2 PRAYER

Merciful God, use our daily circumstances to help us be people that see and welcome your coming. You prepare the way in our hearts, in your way. Amen.





# Living ADVENT

## FAITH CONVERSATIONS The Third Week of Advent

### SUNDAY GOSPEL: LUKE 3:10-18

*I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming.*

### ADULT REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK

The readings and prayers of “Guadete Sunday” call us to rejoice as we near the celebration of Jesus’ birth. Does rejoicing mean “making oneself happy”? Is that possible? Sustainable? Happiness is a fleeting feeling that comes in response to some stimulant – a good cup of coffee, a pleasant interaction, a new toy. Joy is an enduring state of soul that comes from God and needs tending. To rejoice this Advent: remember past blessings and entrust the future to God with sure hope, so as to live the present with peace. Don’t settle for happiness, seek joy!

### CONVERSATION & PRAYER STARTERS

#### SUNDAY

What makes you happy? *Stuff, success, affirmations, cookies, a little peace & quiet.* Are you happy all the time? What makes you joyful? Is it different from happiness?

#### MONDAY

Happiness happens; it comes and goes. Joy endures, runs deeper, is a grace from God. It comes from knowing ourselves, and know-ing/trusting God. Think of a time you had joy but not happiness. Vice versa?

#### TUESDAY

Sunday’s responsorial Psalm praises God for his “glorious achievement.” What good things has God done in your life? In this day? Consider how reflection can foster gratitude and joy.

#### WEDNESDAY

How does recalling God’s hand in the past affect how you think about the future? Hope is being certain of the tenderness of God and confident that all in God’s care will be well in the end. How is hope linked to joy?

#### THURSDAY

Our past is full of both clear and hidden grace. We hope in God’s loving help for the future. And so let’s live our present with peace, which Pope Francis calls “joy lived to perfection.” Are you joyful? What prevents your joy?

#### FRIDAY

In Sunday’s Gospel, John the Baptist admits he’s not the Messiah: “one mightier than I is coming”-Jesus. Humility is living the truth that we’re not God, but we are good (though flawed), loved, and have purpose. How is humility linked to joy?

#### SATURDAY

In Sunday’s 2nd reading, Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always.” We can’t always feel happy, but joy is always available to us and more sustainable. Rejoicing draws from a deep well, accessing something deeper than success, pleasure or comfort. What/who feeds joy in you?

### WEEK 3 PRAYER

With Mary, we glorify you God for the great things you have done for us. Take care of our future. Help us to live right now filled with your peace and joy. Amen.







# Living ADVENT

## FAITH CONVERSATIONS The Fourth Week of Advent

### SUNDAY GOSPEL: LUKE 3:39-45

*Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.*

### ADULT REFLECTION FOR THE WEEK

This week's theme is a call to open ourselves to receive God. Less than a week away, Christmas celebrates Jesus' coming in history – incarnate as a man living amidst humanity; but it invites us to relive the mystery now. Our tender God wants to dwell with you – to be present to your thoughts, feelings, and decisions – to share life with you, as much as spouses share life. This is GOOD NEWS! Do you experience it as such in daily life? Mary experienced this intimacy with God in a unique way; then “went in haste” to share this Good News, to share Jesus' very presence, with her cousin Elizabeth. To whom can you bring the accompanying presence of Jesus this week?

### CONVERSATION & PRAYER STARTERS

#### SUNDAY

What is involved in opening your home to a guest? (*share your time/space, consideration of their needs/wants, get to know them better*) What does it mean to be “open to” an idea, a possibility, help, a person? What does it mean to be open to God?

#### MONDAY

Emmanuel means “God is with us.” In the Old Testament, God dwelt with the Israelites in a tent. John 1 says Jesus became “flesh” and made his dwelling (“pitched his tent”) among us. Sunday's Gospel tells of Elizabeth and her child sensing the physical presence of Jesus inside of Mary – dwelling in her. In an ordinary day, how is “God with you”? How are you shut/open to him?

#### TUESDAY

Tonight is Christmas Eve! The Light has dawned. Hope is fulfilled. Perfect joy is rooted in allowing Jesus to reign in our homes, hearts, and lives. We welcome you, Emmanuel—our Joy!

### WEEK 4 PRAYER

Holy Spirit, come upon us! Heal, cleanse, warm, and fill us with your love. With you, all things are possible. Help us to open our hearts and homes to Jesus with joy. Amen.

