

December 2022

Community Newsletter

Thrive For Life

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READINGS

First Sunday of Advent:

Isaiah 2: 1-5; Matthew 24: 37-44

Second Sunday of Advent:

Isaiah 11: 1-10; Matthew 3: 1-12

Third Sunday of Advent:

Isaiah 35: 1-6a, 10; Matthew 11: 2-11

Fourth Sunday of Advent:

Isaiah 7: 10-14; Matthew 1: 18-24

Christmas Eve: *Isaiah 62: 1-5; Matthew 1: 1-25*

Christmas Day: *Isaiah 52: 7-10; John 1: 1-18*

MONTHLY EXAMEN

We invite you to prayerfully reflect:

Presence

Become aware that God's presence is active at each moment of your life, looking at you with love, desirous of speaking directly to your heart. How do you feel at this moment?

Ask

Ask God for the grace to see the ways God is working in your life.

Gratitude

Be grateful. Thank God for the gifts, both big and small of the day.

What are you most grateful for today?

Review

Trust that God is with you at each moment of day, during the good and challenging moments. God never abandons you.

What were the good moments of today?

What were the greatest challenges of today?

Respond

You are not stuck. Tomorrow is a new day. Ask God to give you the grace to be the loving and generous person you were created to be.

What can you do tomorrow to be more generous and loving?

Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.



ADVENT IS A TIME OF HOPE

This year, Advent began on November 27th, the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend. After having given thanks for a wonderful year, we start a whole new year as church. During Advent, we prepare for the coming of Jesus. We wait full of hope, like Mary waited for Jesus' birth, like the Magi journeyed following the star. Advent is a time of hope.

As we wait for Jesus, we are also called by Jesus. In his reflection "The Call of Christ the King," St. Ignatius invites us to think about the best human leader. This leader says, "Follow me, and we will work together to help everyone who needs help. We will turn all hatred into Love. Working with me will be hard, but we will make this work and share all rewards together!" This sounds amazing, doesn't it? Who would not follow this leader? Now, let's consider the same message from Jesus. "Follow me. I will help all who need help and turn hatred into Love. Carry your cross with me and at the end you will share my Glory." Jesus is God. He can indeed make all these things happen. If we thought that the best human leader was good, then isn't it better to follow Jesus?

Advent is a time of hope. It's the time when Jesus calls us again and we have the opportunity to respond. At the end of Advent, on Christmas, Jesus comes to us in Hope, to be with us always.

*D. Park, Jesuit Scholastic at Ciszek Hall,
Fordham University*



IT'S ADVENT - DON'T PANIC!

FROM NEW YORK TO AUSTRIA AND BEYOND!

For most of my adult life, Advent meant it was time to panic! The pressure of Christmas preparations weighed on me as I lit each Advent candle. But I recently realized that those feelings meant I was missing the point of the season. If we take time to notice, Advent can be rich with Hope and Joy—the hope and joy that come by waiting for Emmanuel (God with Us). This waiting requires our full attention. It entails having “eyes that see and ears that hear” so we can notice the love that God lavishes upon us. Obviously, the love that motivated God to become human in the first place is huge. But if we look attentively, we find that God’s love continues to flow into our world, and we will see God in the people we encounter in our everyday joys and struggles.

Noticing God here and everywhere expands our heart to make room for hope and joy. But hope and joy are acts of will. We can choose to wait in distraction, or we can choose to seek our Emmanuel. If you find that Hope and Joy are hard work and therefore no fun, remember it’s part of a bigger picture. They come from Faith and Love, which will hopefully (pun intended) smooth out the struggle.

Over the years, my Advent panic has transformed into Advent peace as I prepare for Christmas. This new perspective inspires a deep longing for God all year long. Thank you, Advent, for your reminder to wait in hope, joy, faith, and love.

R. Furlan, *Thrive For Life Spiritual Mentor*

On November 21, Cardinal Timothy Dolan visited Eastern New York Correctional Facility. There, Cardinal Dolan presided the Holy Eucharist, in the company of Fr. Zach, prison chaplains of the Archdiocese, inmates and DOCCS staff. Gathered as one big family, around the altar, they all sang “Here I Am, Lord,” together expressing their desire to follow Jesus, to be loved by Jesus, and love him back. After the liturgy, Cardinal Dolan spent time with our brothers in Eastern NY, sharing stories, telling jokes, and enjoying some light breakfast.

That day, Fr. Zach was joined by Fr. Helmut Schumacher, SJ. Fr. Helmut is a Jesuit priest of the European Central Province in Austria. For the next nine months, he will be assisting Fr. Zach at Rikers, Otisville, Wallkill and Shawangunk, delivering our quality, meditative retreats rooted in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Fr. Helmut will also help with the spiritual life at the new Ignacio House and numerous projects at our office.

In 2014, I entered the Jesuit novitiate and became fascinated by Ignatian Spirituality. In the biblical meditations, we have an encounter with God and become present as we enter a very personal relationship with Jesus. In everyday life, this relationship inspires us, and we let the world become our home with God. This was especially noticeable in my work after the novitiate in Innsbruck back in Austria. There I directed the MK Youth Center at the Jesuit College and built up a retreat house for young adults. It was a wonderful experience for me, and I was able to meet and accompany many great people on their journey of faith.

BECOME A RESIDENT SCHOLAR AT IGNACIO HOUSE OF STUDIES!

If you are passionate about your education and wish to continue your academic journey post-release, Ignacio House offers transitional supportive housing along with a holistic suite of services for formerly incarcerated students. Find a sense of purpose and overcome barriers to employment, housing, and education.

Interested in joining? Send the following to our contact information at the top of this page:

- Full name & DIN number •
- Current college you are enrolled in and/or where you will study post-release •
- Contact information for college/university where you will study •