

December 23–24, 2018

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

Light three purple candles and one pink candle.

“Blessed are you among woman.” —Luke 1:42

Today's Gospel is the story—so precious and moving—of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth: two pregnant women—one very young; the other very old—awaiting the births of their unexpected children.

No better example than this of our “God of surprises.”

Just when we think hope is lost, God's love and redeeming power save us yet again. Now in this time and year, let us pray and work for justice for all immigrants and refugees. And let us remember that the theme of immigration is placed throughout the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of St. Luke and St. Matthew. The Holy Family faces danger and an unsettled future again and again. To love Jesus's family is to love all who are in similar peril. They are ALL our Holy Families.

Returning to today's Gospel, our two mothers invite us to live and celebrate the mystery of Christmas with faith and surprise and love for all.

Happy the town where there are believing mothers, bearers of life, capable of radiating peace and joy. Happy the Church where there are women blessed by God, who live out their faith in acts of loving kindness.

Let Us Pray

Lord Jesus let your Spirit light my actions and give me the strength to follow what Your Word has made me see. Make me, like Mary, your Mother, not only to listen, but also to put the Word into action. You who live and reign with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Office of Human Dignity and Solidarity
Immigration Ministry
Cardinal Meyer Center
3525 South Lake Park Avenue
Chicago, IL 60653

We have been seeking compassionate, comprehensive immigration reform since 2005. In this 13th year of the journey seeking legislative shelter, may we accompany and welcome our immigrant sisters and brothers through prayer, reflection, and action. Take legislative action at justiceforimmigrants.org.

First Week of Advent

Give a gift of prayer for migrants and refugees:

That we may open our hearts to welcome migrants, we pray...

That we may work for compassionate immigration reform, we pray...

That we may accompany DREAMers and their families as they face uncertainty, we pray...

Second Week of Advent

Stand with others by giving honor to Mary-Our Lady of Guadalupe or supporting advocacy activities at justiceforimmigrants.org

Third Week of Advent

Join the immigration reform Posada (seeking legislative shelter) on December 14, 2018 at 7 a.m. at 101 West Congress Parkway (visit catholicsandimmigrants.org for details and for a Posada directory) or organize a Simbang Gabi, a Filipino custom.

Fourth Week of Advent

Join the prayer vigil at the Broadview Detention Center, 1930 South Beach Street, Broadview, on Fridays at 7:15 a.m. or pray in solidarity with those being deported.

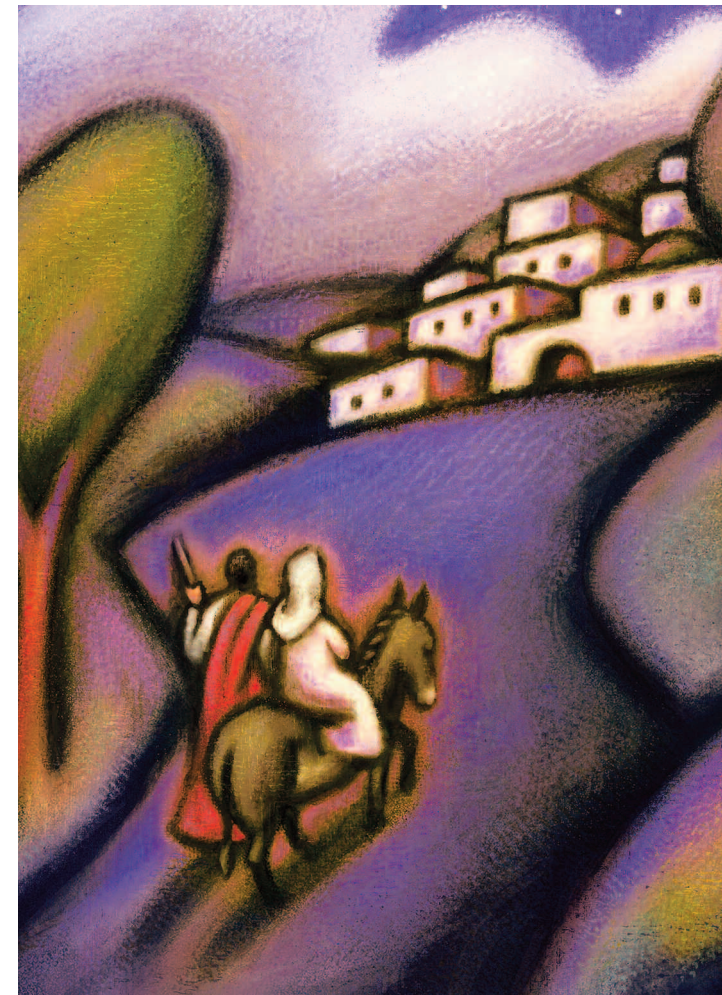
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Visit: catholicsandimmigrants.org

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



IMMIGRATION MINISTRY

ADVENT REFLECTIONS 2018



December 2–8, 2018

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

Light one purple candle.

“Look up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” —Luke 22:28

We have all had moments of crisis in our lives when we do not know what to do or where to turn. And all we need to do is to turn on the latest newscast to see the struggles of immigrants and refugees, in our country, on our borders, and around the globe. We can feel their fear and anguish because they have been left without assistance and security. In the end, what can we do? How can we unite our spiritual journey with the journey and struggles of immigrants? We can find suggestions in today's Gospel from St. Luke, to help us along the way.

Raise your head: See the world around you. Be aware of the fate of immigrants in our world and the great contributions of immigrants and refugees in our own communities. Form friendships and spiritual alliances between and among all ethnic groups in your parish. As Jesus did, speak to all and expand your horizon beyond the familiar. Remember that life is more than we can ever imagine, so let us stretch ourselves as far as we can. May we be liberated from all that limits us from all that is good and all that is God.

Pay attention: Do not let yourself be stunned by the evil in the world: rise to the challenge. Listen to the news; read reports and stories of immigrants and refugees published on our website, catholicsandimmigrants.org and explore other resources. Learn as much as you can.

Be awake: Make practical plans to assist families impacted by immigration raids or deportations. Attend a meeting of a *Pastoral Migratoria* group at your parish or others to inquire how non-immigrants can help them. Do not live asleep; awaken and “pray unceasingly,” for ourselves, for all immigrants and refugees and for our world.

Let Us Pray

Lord Jesus, let your example guide my actions and give me the strength and courage to follow your Word. In your name we pray. Amen.

December 9–15, 2018

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Light two purple candles.

“Prepare the way of the Lord.” —Luke 3:4

Nowhere can God's call to change the world be better heard than in the desert. The desert is the territory of truth, the place where the essential is lived; there is no place for the superfluous; it is not possible to live there accumulating things without necessity: it is a place where there is no room for luxury or ostentation. The decisive thing is to look for the right path to guide life.

Many immigrants to the United States enter the country through the deserts on our southern border. By themselves or with a guide (who may or may not be honestly helping them), these refugees from poverty and violence face an arduous journey that can leave them physically dissipated and at the point of death. In fact, many *do* die during this crossing, never making it the other side.

Others survive, but only through the help of samaritan groups organized by faith communities that place water bottles and nutrients on the paths through the desert.

Perhaps we can't be that kind of *samaritan* but let us strive to bring the Living Waters of faith and hope to those in need of conversion, as John the Baptist did in the Judean Desert, calling all to “*Prepare the way of the Lord.*”

How to respond to this call today? By assisting immigrants and refugees in any way we can, by studying and sharing Catholic Social Teaching with our parishes, and by publicly showing our support for immigrant and refugee justice at rallies, vigils, and our upcoming *Posada* (see back) Be a public witness, as John was.

Let Us Pray

Lord, come to my aid this Advent. May your voice not remain in the desert, but may it resound in my heart so that I may place my gifts at the service of others. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

December 16–22, 2018

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

Light two purple candles and one pink candle.

“What shall we do?” —Luke 3:12

John the Baptist from the desert touched the hearts of the people. Among many of them he raised a specific question: What should we do? Let us not read these words as biblical history, but as a contemporary challenge: *What should WE do?* In answering that question, it is important to remember that although John the Baptist lived in a desert wilderness, he was very much concerned with the centers of imperial power and called them to task for their sins and crimes against the people they ruled.

What can we say before the world full of injustice, where a third of humanity lives in misery? John would say, “*CRY OUT!*” How do I respond as a Christian to this call so simple and so human? Should we not begin to open our eyes and our hearts to become more responsive to the injustice in our world?

We are now more than halfway through Advent. Our calendars are filling up with Christmas parties and many of us are spending time online or in shopping malls, purchasing gifts. Perhaps we could pull ourselves back to the real purpose of Advent, as a kind of “new year,” preparing ourselves spiritually for the year to come. Gifts can wait. Parties can also be a part of the whole Christmas season and not crowded into the first 24 days of December.

Let us spend time in good works, in caring for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger, and in getting to know the character and life of John the Baptist, asking for his help and following his words.

Let Us Pray

Oh Word, splendor of the Father, your gospel of peace frees us from all guilt. Shine light on my mind and hope in my soul. Give me a compassionate heart that that responds to the world in justice and love. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.