

Pregnant Pauses: Advent Video Series

Introduction

This series is built around the stories of people living the extraordinary in the ordinariness of their everyday experiences. May you also be encouraged to pause in the midst of this Advent season to savor the miracles of your own world. Whether you are using this series for individual reflection or family devotion, the hope is that it will spark loving memories for you, and that you share those stories with others. Let the storytelling begin and let the love spread!



First Sunday of Advent: *Angel Feathers*

The Annunciation by James Christensen

Religious Tradition : Luke 1: 26-38

Reflection: This week we encourage you to look for the “angel feathers” God gives you to remind you of God’s unconditional love, and to share those stories with others. In turn, you might also ask yourself how you can be a sign of God’s love and an “angel feather” for others?

Prayer Response: Advent Invitatory

Composed and sung by Benedictine Sisters of Mount St. Scholastica

Let us now put on Christ Jesus.

Let us awaken to the Spirit within us.

O Lord, you once favored your land,
and revived the fortunes of Jacob.

Will you not restore again our life
that your people may rejoice in you?

Let us see O Lord your mercy,
and give us your saving help.

I will hear what God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace.

Mercy and faithfulness have met.
Justice and peace have embraced.

Faithfulness shall spring from the earth,
and justice look down from heaven.

The Lord will make us prosper,
and our earth shall yield its fruit.

Justice shall march before him,
and peace shall follow his steps.

Let us now put on Christ Jesus.

Let us awaken to the Spirit within us.



Second Sunday of Advent: *Are You Sure?*

Religious Tradition:

St. Juan Diego and the Miracle of Our Lady of Guadalupe

<https://www.nationalshrine.org/blog/st-juan-diego-and-the-miracle-of-our-lady-of-guadalupe/>

Reflection: This week we are asking you to remember who taught you to believe in yourself? Maybe it would be a good time to tell them what they have meant to you? In return, who are you enabling to believe in themselves?

Third Sunday of Advent: *I Need a Hug*

Religious Tradition: Luke 1: 39-45

Reflection: Family therapists say that hugs are vital for our mental, emotional and physical health. We need 4 hugs a day for survival, 8 hugs a day for maintenance, and 12 hugs a day for growth. So, this week we encourage you to ask someone if they need a hug. You may be helping them survive or maybe even to grow.



Fourth Sunday of Advent: *Being the Skin of God's Love*

Religious Tradition

St. Teresa of Avila taught us:

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which God looks Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which God walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which God blesses all the world.

Reflection: As Christmas draws near, take a moment to remember who has been the skin of God's love for you? It would also be a good time to ask yourself how are you using your hands, feet, and eyes (and maybe even your hair) to be God's blessing on the world?

Being the Skin of God's Love

Anne Harvey

5-27-2015 *From the dream that woke me in the middle of the night:*

We fumble through life making blunders as we try to make our way- the most important thing we do in life is to be the synapse that takes the touch of God's care for us- God's love- and connect it to our brain so we know God is with us. God's love shows through other human beings, and we can do it too.

You too can be the skin of God's love. I am not great- you are not great either. God is the one who is great. But God uses us- as it says in Romans- "All things done are for the greater glory of God." Sometimes, as I blunder along, I am lucky enough to get it right. I become God's touch to the needs of the world. And the really good news is you can do it too. We are not God. But rather God's tools. God's hands, feet, muscle and most of all we become the skin. I am the flesh of God- through the Eucharist I received and here in our world.

6-19-2024

I have read and contemplated and tried to live this through the time that has passed since then. It has become a part of who I am and how I live and how I face my daily life- through my joys, my pains, my challenges, my strengths and my times of weariness. In many little ways I try to serve the world. These later years as my body has battled with functioning, I keep trying to find little ways I can continue to reach out to serve others, to serve the world. It has extended into the way I serve nature and God present here among us: From a smile, a kind word, an action towards humans, to a far bigger picture of how every living thing is connected. I've planted things that feed the cycle of life- from soil, and what grows from microbes, to compost, to seeds, to flowers and pollen to what feeds on those pollinators and fruits. Gardening is more than just flowers vegetables, bushes and trees planted. I feed nature that feeds all. Even as I sit and pray, and listen, and offer up pain, I am becoming one with the universe. I am grateful for many moments of Joy, of pleasure, of awareness of what surrounds myself and others. I want to continue to be the skin of God to what is around me and what I can do.

I dye my hair purple because it makes strangers smile. It brightens others to see my lighthearted look. I know it keeps working because I hear so many people say, "I love your hair." I respond, "I'm so glad it made you smile. That's why I do it." I see a lot of smiles. It has made some new friends, but mostly it just brings a little joy to the world around me. It also is a symbol to myself of anticipation of my resurrection to come- when I will more fully be present with God.

When All the Others Were Away at Mass *Seamus Heaney*

When all the others were away at Mass
I was all hers as we peeled potatoes.
They broke the silence, let fall one by one
Like solder weeping off the soldering iron:
Cold comforts set between us, things to share
Gleaming in a bucket of clean water.
And again let fall. Little pleasant splashes
From each other's work would bring us to our senses.
So while the parish priest at her bedside
Went hammer and tongs at the prayers for the dying
And some were responding and some were crying
I remembered her head bent towards my head,
Her breath in mine, our fluent dipping knives –
Never closer the whole rest of our lives.

