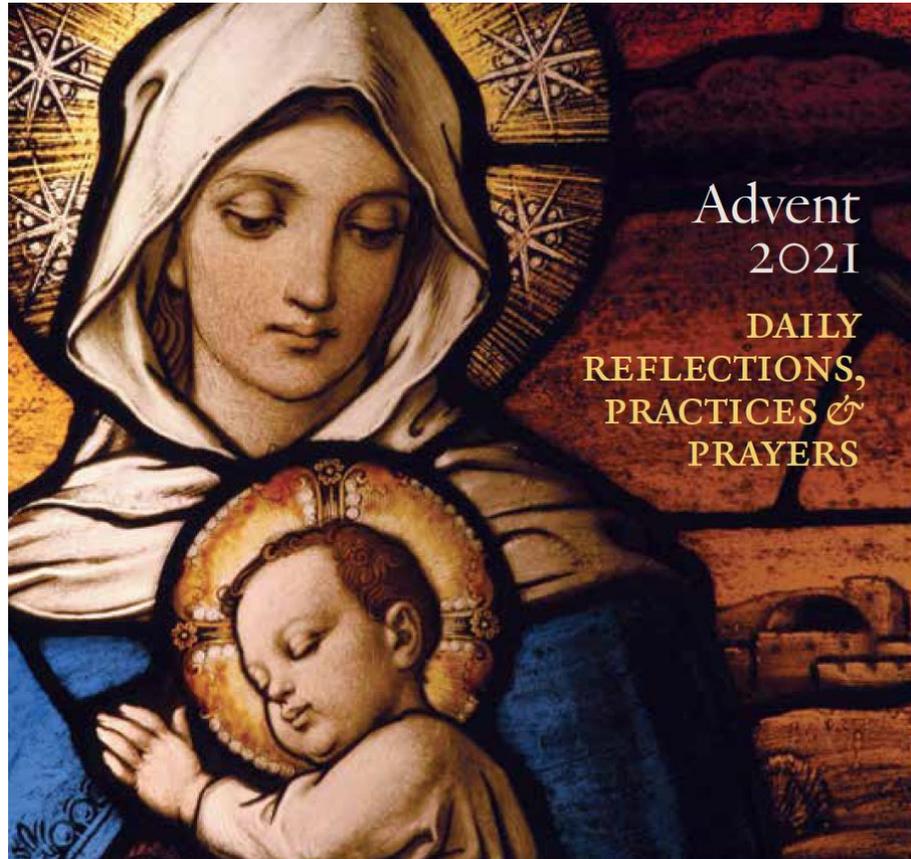


*Advent 2021 Reflection Journal
for use with*



Waiting in
Wondrous
Expectation

JANET SCHAEFFLER, OP

For those using *Waiting in Wonderous Expectation* for small group faith sharing, please consider the following guidelines.

St. Monica Small Group Guidelines

Participating in a small group faith sharing activity is a spiritual opportunity that benefits everyone involved. Please read the guidelines together before each meeting.

God has created each of us uniquely, and I recognize that everyone comes to this experience with different backgrounds, experiences and views. I commit to **honoring differences**, knowing they add to the richness of the group's experience.

God frequently speaks through the unfamiliar and different. I will **listen intently** in order to fully understand different points of view, realizing these other views will help with my own evolving journey.

Listening is an act of love and care. I will **practice sacred listening, listen with respect, not interrupt, and not engage in side conversations.**

How I treat another person is much more important than my opinions and perspectives. I will **respectfully seek clarification** of other perspectives to add to my understanding.

Because God made us, all persons are of equal importance and value, and all voices are important. I commit to assuring that **everyone has an opportunity to speak**, and I will **encourage others to speak before I speak again.**

I will **never criticize or condemn** what others share. I will **never give advice**. I am **free to remain silent**, if I wish.

We gather to care, not to cure. **God does the curing.**

God has given each of us gifts that are given in the hope and expectation that these gifts will be shared. I will **participate fully**, share responsibility for the group's process and experience, and commit to faithful attendance. **I commit to being on time.**

We trust one another completely. **Everything we share is always confidential.** I will honor that everything shared within this group is to stay within this group.

Preparing for the Advent Journey

...setting the context

“In this season of Advent, we are called to expand the horizons of our hearts, to be amazed by the life which presents itself each day with newness. In order to do this, we must learn to not depend on our own certainties, on our own established strategies, because the Lord comes at a time that we do not imagine. He comes to bring us into a more beautiful and grand dimension.”

Pope Francis, Angelus, 27th November 2016

We invite you to enter into the season of anticipation, using ***Waiting in Wondrous Expectation*** by Janet Schaeffler, OP. This guides us through the daily readings throughout Advent, providing opportunity for prayer and reflection. As you reflect, you may wish to consider the following:

- ~ KNOW now that God is present
- ~ READ the gospel
- ~ NOTICE what you think and feel
- ~ PRAY as you are led for yourself and others
- ~ LISTEN to God
- ~ ASK God to show you how to live each day

Questions are provided to stimulate reflection each day. Please know these are for your personal contemplation and can be used (or not used) in whatever way helps you connect to the readings for the day. Perhaps there is even another question that you might ask, one not presented in this booklet.

KNOW that God is present with you and ready to converse. We are encouraged by our faith to spend more time in quiet reflection. Spend some time as you begin this process reflecting on your schedule and see how you can arrange your time to include prayer and reflection in all the busyness of your life.

First Week of Advent

Week 1: 11/28-12/4

Sunday: On God's Side

What do I believe is God's vision for the world? In what ways do I believe I am on God's side? What challenges do I face in this endeavor? How can this Advent help with this?

Monday: Back to Normal

How am I able to "walk in the light of the Lord?" Who am I called to be? How do I want my life to be changed because of recent experiences? What are my dreams for the world?

Tuesday: Scattering Good News

In what ways am I being called today? How do I bring the good news to others? Where in my life could I bring more positivity?

Wednesday: F.R.O.G

What areas of my life might I especially need to let God into more because “I wasn’t enough?”
How can I use my gifts to become my best but also let go of being in control? How can I more Fully Rely On God?

Thursday: Prayer Calls Us to Act

How do I participate in the will of the Father? Do I have good intentions upon which I haven’t acted? How is my prayer life connected to my actions?

Friday: One-inch Seeing

What do I want to focus on today? What can I pay better attention to? What might I be missing?
Where in my life have I been blind to what is important?

Saturday: Hatched, Not Broken

Where is my life cracked or broken? How has God healed my hurts and bound my wounds? How can I “hatch” that into something new? How am I being called to heal and give without cost?

Reflections from the week:

Second Week of Advent

Week 2: 12/5-12/11

Sunday: Restoring and Renewing the Pathways

What paths in my life am I being called to make straight? Who might I reach out to today? How can I connect more fully with others? How can I more completely prepare the way for Christ in my life?

Monday: Shoulder Taps

How good am I at listening for what God has to say? How might God be reaching out to me today? Have there been times when I feel God's encouragement to say or do something? How does this make me feel?

Tuesday: You Matter

Have I ever felt like the lost sheep? Are there times when I have been alone, separated from others? How does this feel? What can I do to help those who may be feeling alone? In what ways do I think God is rejoicing in me?

Wednesday: Original Goodness

Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

When do I feel the Lord with me? How do I see the image of God? What do I love most about myself? How do I share that with others?

Thursday: Holding Up the Sky

How do I believe God is working through me? What actions can I take today to reveal God to others? In what ways has God answered my prayers?

Friday: Prophetic Hope

Who is a source of wisdom for me? Who might I consider a prophet in our time? Whose words do I respect and listen to?

Saturday: Gifts from Suffering

What gifts have I found in times of suffering? How does Christ's suffering impact me? Were there any gifts in the suffering of the pandemic? Have I seen gifts in others as a result of their suffering?

Reflections from the week:

Third Week of Advent

Week 3: 12/12-12/18

Sunday: Joy of Hygge

What brings me joy? How can I better embrace what is and/or celebrate the now? What are some simple things that I could take more time to enjoy?

Monday: A Safe Home

Where do I feel the most “at home?” In what ways do I experience God living with me? Where and how do I make a “safe home” for others? Who makes one for me?

Tuesday: Always Love

When have I felt brokenhearted and when have I felt loved? How have I felt the Lord close in these times? What am I doing in response? How am I living out God’s will for me?

Wednesday: Always and Everywhere

What has been a sacred moment in my life today? Where have I been looking for God? How has God been present in moments I didn't expect? In what ways do I make God more visible in the world?

Thursday: The Music of Reassurance

In what ways do I experience God's steadfast love? How have I connected with others recently? How does music affect me? Do I find music to be helpful in my prayer life?

Friday: God in Our Family's History

What are my feelings about family? What has the concept of family taught me? How has God been revealed through my familial relationships? Who do I need to reach out to today?

Saturday: Side by Side

Who walks by my side? How does this make me feel? How am I as a companion? Who could I do a better job of walking with?

Reflections from the week:

Fourth Week of Advent

Week 4: 12/19-12/24

Sunday: Courageous Tenderness

How do I understand the ideas of tenderness and courage? How have I experienced these as gifts in my life? In what ways do I call myself blessed?

Monday: In the Darkness

What causes me fear or worry? When have I been in darkness? What have I learned from these times? What are things I can do to move my fears to peace? How can I transform my darkness into light?

Tuesday: Living the Incarnation

How do I live out the Incarnation? In what ways might I bring Christ to life for others? Have I felt God's presence with or within me?

Wednesday: Newfound Gratitude

What am I most grateful for? How do I act because of this gratitude? How do I proclaim God's greatness? How can I nurture a grateful heart?

Thursday: The Whole Picture

When have I come to conclusions or judgement without all of the facts? What can I learn from these situations? What might I need to hand over to God today, knowing that I may not have the "whole picture?" Do I participate in patient, listening prayer?

Friday: The Path of Peace

How do I work with others to consider issues in life? How do I respond to God's invitation to walk with God as my guide? How can I be further led to a way of peace?

The Nativity of the Lord

Saturday: Recognizing God

Christ is born! How can I work to more clearly see Christ in my life and in the world each day? As Christ is born anew in me, what do I desire to do differently? How do I feel knowing God is with me?

Reflections from the week:

Lord, I pray that you will continue to reveal yourself to me and that I may see you in all things. Thank you for teaching me to...

KNOW you in new life,

READ about you on my journey,

NOTICE you in all things each day,

PRAY to you in thanksgiving and need,

LISTEN intently for your will and your direction

ASK for help and guidance along the way.

Amen! Emmanuel, God with us! Jesus is born in ME!