

ADVENT 2020

WAITING FOR CHRIST IN TIMES OF COVID

Dear Sister and Brother Spiritual Advisors,

2020 hasn't been an easy year. We spent most of Lent and all of the Easter Season in Covid shutdown. Ordinary Time has been anything but ordinary. Now it looks like Advent and Christmas will be modified to reflect the reality of the pandemic.

Most of our conferences and councils have not met in person for many months. This presents a very real challenge to our commitment to 'Come together as a family'. Just how will we manage to use our creativity to keep in touch with our fellow Vincentians?

How about developing a simple Advent programme for our conference or council? This can be done online, using any of the communication methods available: email, Messenger, etc. Just use what your membership is used to, and it doesn't have to be complicated. We all have a little more time during Covid so maybe we can use it in advent preparations. Perhaps we can share our advent programme with our fellow conference/council members too.

Here are some suggestions:

- Encourage members to have an advent wreath at home, or at least to light a candle every day. Supper time is traditional, but my husband and I like to light our advent wreath and do our daily meditation first thing in the morning, before other things can interrupt.
- Recommend an Advent meditation series. There are many available online. Every year, we download The Little Purple Book for Advent and follow it every day during Advent and the Christmas season. If you subscribe to the Living with Christ missalette you already have their advent booklet; it came with the November missalette.
- Suggest that Vincentians follow a Jesse Tree-type meditation on those who were called to wait for and to serve Jesus. Send members a list of names of those who waited and served and where to find them in the Bible or in other sources. Begin with Adam and Eve and conclude with Mary. You might want to reserve Sundays for studying St. Vincent de Paul, St. Louise de Marillac, Blessed Rosalie and Blessed Frederic. As members read about those who came before us, they can reflect on how each person was called, how she/he responded, and what that call tells me about my call to Vincentian service. Use your own resources and your favourite stories. Here's an example of what you could do:

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT 2020

November 29 - 1st Sunday of Advent: St. Vincent de Paul St. Vincent originally became a priest in order to have a comfortable life. He found himself evangelized by the poor. How has my Vincentian vocation evangelized me?

Monday, November 20 – Abraham Genesis 12: 1-4 Abram (later Abraham) was called to leave home and tribe at the age of 75. He did so without hesitation. When have I been called to do something new and difficult? How did I make my decision?

Tuesday, December 1 – Jacob Genesis 28: 10-22 After God's promise was revealed to Jacob, in a dream, Jacob made a vow to return one tenth of everything to God. How much do I give back to God? How do I do this?

Wednesday, December 2 – Joseph Genesis 37: 1-4 Joseph was beloved by his father, Jacob, and because of this, his brothers hated him. Have I ever experienced ill will because of something beyond my control? How did I deal with this?

Thursday, December 3 – Moses Exodus 3: 1- 14 Not everyone hears the voice of God coming from a burning bush, but Vincentians have heard God's call in some form or another. How did I know God wanted me to do something?

Friday, December 4 – Joshua – Numbers 27: 15-23 Joshua was commissioned, by Moses, as Moses' successor, in front of the assembly of the people. Does my Conference/Council have a commissioning ceremony for each new president?

Saturday, December 5 – Samson Judges 13: 1-5 and 16:15-31 As long as Samson lived according to his vow he was indestructible. Breaking his vow caused his downfall. What vows have I made? How have these impacted my life?

SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 6 – St. Louise de Marillac/// Monday – Ruth/// Tuesday – Hannah///
Wednesday – Samuel/// Thursday – David & Goliath/// Friday – David and Jonathan///
Saturday – Solomon

THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 13 – Bl. Rosalie Rendu/// Monday – Elijah/// Tuesday – Isaiah/// Wednesday –
Jonah/// Thursday – The Maccabees/// Friday – Zechariah and Elizabeth/// Saturday – John the
Baptist///

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 20 – Bl Frederic Ozanam/// Monday – Joseph of Nazareth/// Tuesday – Virgin
Mary/// Wednesday – Angels and Wise Men/// Thursday – The Birth

May God continue to bless us as winter comes and the sun sets earlier. In these longer nights may our thoughts and our hearts turn toward World Day of the Poor and the Advent/Christmas season.

Denise