

## Possibilities for the Advent journey from the North American Migration Committee

"I am here to see your faces and look into your eyes: eyes full of fear and expectancy, eyes that have seen violence and poverty, eyes streaked by too many tears. Looking at you, I see the suffering caused by your journey; I see all those people who were kidnapped, sold, exploited and who are still on the journey, we know not where"

(Visit of Pope Francis to Cyprus and Greece December 2021)



*UNICEF; Santiago Aris*

The season of Advent-Christmas-Epiphany beckons us. We welcome its call even as we deal with the fatigue, the worry and fear of living in these times of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has put a spotlight on the injustices and inequities in our world and has connected us more profoundly to the pierced heart of humanity with myths about ourselves, our church and our countries being shattered. Yet, fittingly, the Advent season invites us to enter into one of the tenderest moments of God's encounter with humanity. God's presence among us, manifested in Jesus, brings hope for the well-being of the entire human family. Each year we return to this mystery of love and we wait patiently for the light and peace it brings. We see this love in the Visitation of Mary running to accompany Elizabeth in her moment of need. We find it in the loving witness of countless refugees risking all in search of a just life for their children. We also see this love in each one of you continuing to open your hearts to welcome refugees encountering and recognizing that Jesus himself, with Mary and Joseph, were refugees. Caring for migrants and refugees is a constituent part of the church's care for those on the margins of society and of our own Dehonian charism as well. Today, Pope Francis asks us to go to "the peripheries" for it is here that we encounter the migrants, the refugee and the internally displaced person.

### **SOME POSSIBILITIES FOR US TO CONSIDER FOR OUR ADVENT JOURNEY**

- **There are migrants in all of our communities:** Speak with them, welcome them, and treat them with dignity! Learn what they need; offer to teach them the language of your community; learn some of their language and culture. Taste their food and offer yours. Be

in solidarity, that is, be close to their realities and offer them safe, hospitable places where they can be accompanied, listened to, equipped with training to increase digital proficiency and provided with the necessary resources to develop their potential to rebuild their lives. Exert greater effort to appreciate the richness of diversity and grow in the attitudes and skills of interculturality. Create opportunities for migrants to make their own meaningful contributions to the community. Open your communities whenever and wherever possible to create opportunities for volunteers to work with migrants. Pray unceasingly and persistently that the human dignity of all migrants will be respected. (*Excerpt of NAMC paper presented to the Theological Commission*)

- **[Posadas 2021 \(wufoo.com\)](http://wufoo.com) (December 16-24):** "The tradition of Las Posadas is a re-enactment of the eve of the first Christmas, when Joseph and Mary searched for room at the inn, but none was to be found. This is a daily experience of music, prayer, reflection, and action as we virtually journey with the migrants on the U.S-Mexico border in search of shelter and protection, just as the Holy Family did on Christmas Eve." [Each day via text or email](#), you'll receive a short video.
- **International Migrants Day (December 18):** International Migrants Day commemorates the adoption of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. There are over 272 million migrants in the world today. One of every six migrants is under the age of 20. [Learn more](#). Consider praying [Prayer for Migrants](#). Deepen your reflections with the Justice for Immigrants' [Fratelli Tutti and Migration Discussion Guide](#).

This Advent, let us stand in solidarity with the Holy Family and will all migrant families in search of protection and shelter.

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