

“No time is more suitable for practicing humility than the holy time of Advent, in which we celebrate the mystery of the incarnation, which is and remains always a mystery of deepest humility.”

**Blessed Theresa of Jesus, foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame – letter #5013**

How do the  
spiritual  
themes of  
Advent connect  
with  
discernment?



In our culture, Advent is often experienced as the pre-Christmas season of frenzied shopping, rushed decorating, and endless parties and gatherings—oh! and Churches decked out in purple. We know Christmas is more than Santa Claus, rich cookies, and a nativity scene. But this short, sacred season can sweep past us in a blur and we barely ponder why we are once again waiting for a Messiah who came 2000 years ago.

I love giving retreats and evenings of reflection in this short but spiritually hefty season of themes that are not really part of any other time of the liturgical season. So what are the rich spiritual themes of Advent—and how do they connect with discernment?

Advent is about waiting for something that you need but don't have, someone you love but have not seen, something you can hope in amid the world's overwhelming darkness. If you have ever been perplexed by the events of life, confused by the presence of suffering or oppression, saddened by the seeming lack of meaning or of goodness in the world, then you need a Messiah!

Yes, Jesus came in history over 2000 years ago, but you, WE, need the Messiah to come afresh in our world with His message of hope and His promise of Light. During Advent we are called to hold the darkness, and in that space yearn for God to come again into our world, into our lives. But in order to do that, we have to stop long enough to see that all the tinsel and all the wrapped gifts still don't fill our hearts with peace. All the loud carols and bright decorations cannot bring deep inner calm like the voice of God experienced in the quiet of our prayer.

People who are trying to make an important or weighty decision in their life are living a kind of Advent. They are waiting for God's guidance to come with a clarity that will bring light into their life and a focus into their living. They

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are waiting to see the face their soul longs for, the face that will look back at them with complete love and acceptance. If you are one on the path of discerning, put on your Advent spirit and wait in the dark until the Light of God springs forth! For it will come. It will surely come. “Be stouthearted, wait for the Lord.” (Psalm 27:14) He is coming!

**For reflection: How will you “put on your Advent spirit” this season?**

*[The above writing was originally published as a blog by Sr. Cheryl Rose on [A Nun's Life](http://www.anunslife.org), December, 2016] To see more of the great and helpful content from “A Nun's Life”, consult [www.anunslife.org](http://www.anunslife.org)*

## Looking Ahead

Christmas Preparation Prayer  
December 17-23, 2019 6:30p  
Sancta Maria in Ripa, St. Louis, MO  
[cjdust@ssnd.org](mailto:cjdust@ssnd.org)  
636-875-0399

Candlelight Christmas Novena  
December 20, 2019 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Our Lady of Good Counsel, Mankato MN  
Carpooling to Mankato provided  
[sspandl@ssnd.org](mailto:sspandl@ssnd.org)

Christmas Novena  
December 22, 2019  
Notre Dame of Elm Grove  
Elm Grove, WI

Youth in Theology and Ministry Retreat  
January 3-4, 2020  
St. John's University  
Collegeville, MN

[Life Awareness Retreat](#)  
January 10-12, 2020  
Cordis Marian Retreat Center  
San Antonio, TX  
[bwaldorf@ssnd.org](mailto:bwaldorf@ssnd.org)

Vocation Presentations  
February 16, 2020  
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton  
Plano, TX

### Did you know?

Each of our *Vocation Reflections* is available on-line at our website:  
<https://ssnd.org/become-sister/vocation-resources/>

### This month's resource:

- Prayer service honoring the [Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe \(Dec. 12\)](#). Join us as we prayerfully reflect on how Our Lady is calling us to share her message of unity, compassion, and dignity for all; and how we can be a welcoming, loving presence to migrants, and to all who seem different from us.
- [Novena celebrating Las Posadas](#), a Mexican religious tradition celebrated **Dec. 16-24** that commemorates Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and their struggle to find refuge there. Join us in praying for immigrants and refugees, and for our hearts to be opened to receiving the grace offered to us by their presence.



### *Looking Ahead Liturgically:*

*Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe:  
December 12 (Thursday)*

*Third Sunday of Advent: December 15*

*Fourth Sunday of Advent: December 22*

*Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord (Christmas): December 25 (Wednesday)*

*Feast of the Holy Family: December 29*

*Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God: January 1, 2020*

*Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord: January 5*

*Feast of the Baptism of the Lord: January 12*

*(Artist: Magdalena via [SmartPolonia](#))*