

Blessed Theresa, foundress of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, reminds us:

“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.” (Letter #5013)

How do the spiritual themes of Advent connect with discernment?

Sister Cheryl Rose, HM (click [here](#) for the original)

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 2,000 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 2,000 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 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!

“People who are trying to make an important or weighty decision in their life are living a kind of Advent.”

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

This month’s vocation resource:

To many, the term religious vocation refers to priests and nuns. It’s about the parish pastor or the religious sisters who teach at the local school or help with faith formation at church. But the world of religious vocations is much broader. Read more [here](#).

DID YOU KNOW?

Back issues of Vocation Reflections are available [online](#).
You can stay up-to-date with SSND Vocations at flowpage.com/ssnd or scan the code below.

Looking ahead

Online Evening Prayer

December 20, 2022
January 24, 2023
8 p.m. ET / 7 p.m. CT

Joyful & Alive Conversation

January 19, 2023
8 p.m. ET / 7 p.m. CT

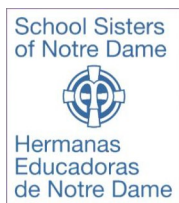
SSND Discernment Weekend (details TBA)

February 17-19, 2023
St. Louis, MO



Additional resources

- [Prayer service](#) honoring the **Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe** (December 12) who calls 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 December 16-24, 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.



Vocation Reflections is a monthly newsletter for those interested in learning more about discernment, prayer, and other topics related to the consecrated/vowed life. For questions, comments and subscription information, please contact sisters@ssnd.org.