

ADVENT 2022

WEEK ONE

Hospitality:

A POSTURE
OF PREPAREDNESS



Hospitality is the heart of who we are as Catholic health care.



It welcomes us to receive its richness as much as it calls us to share it with others. As we continue to be formed through the healing ministry of Jesus in the commitments of our founders this Advent, the Catholic Health Association invites you to discover the spiritual practice of hospitality as a deep, subversive act of love — where in every encounter, God’s transforming presence always dwells.

The weeks leading up to Christmas, known by Christians as Advent, is a time of spiritual preparation. In Advent, we anticipate Jesus’ coming to bring glad tidings to the poor, to

proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, and to let the oppressed go free. (Luke 4:18)

We are pleased to offer a weekly spiritual smorgasbord that will encourage you to live with more intention into this radical practice — in your heart, your home, your workplace, and your community. May you and your health care colleagues find nourishment and hope in the days ahead through our offering of prayers, scriptures and reflections, stories, recipes, podcast episodes, and music.

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

**“Hospitality is simply love in action.
It has much more to do with the resources
of a generous heart than with sufficiency
of food or space.”**

CHRISTINE D. POHL

“Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition”

WEEK ONE

Hospitality: A Posture of Preparedness

There's a diagram that reflects this week's Advent invitation. A simple circle is displayed and the caption within the circle reads "my comfort zone." Adjacent to the circle lies a much smaller circle labeled, "where the magic happens."

In the season of Advent, Christians prepare their minds, hearts, and bodies to anticipate the coming of Emmanuel, God with us. We are invited to shift our practice and our posture to receive the Christ Child. Yet we who deem ourselves expert caregivers often practice hospitality toward another within the limits of our own comfort zone: as it works on our watch, as it fits within our agenda, accompanied by whatever accoutrements we predict may best serve the other.

This week's reading invites us into a posture of preparedness outside our own expectations: we don't know when God will arrive or what form God will take.

Scripture paints a picture of God coming swiftly in the ordinary. For us in Catholic healthcare, sacred moments surround us each and every day. In routine clinical encounters or the mundane of non-clinical tasks, this passage invites us to stay awake to the holy among us; God comes unexpectedly and challenges our predictions and our planning. The invitation here is a much different stance than meal prepping, house cleaning, or table setting. It is a posture of preparedness that ushers us to abandon the clench of predictability, the safety of the status quo, the glory of the badge of hospitality.

Might it be that hospitality outside our own comfort zone is exactly where the magic may happen this Advent? Might we seek a posture of preparedness to meet the coming Emmanuel on God's terms?

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

This week, take some time to consider hospitality in your heart, your home, your workplace, and your community.

- When you think about hospitality, in one or two words, what is your initial response?
- As you offer hospitality to others, what does your comfort zone look like/feel like/sound like?
- Think of a recent patient or co-worker encounter where you sensed God in your midst: what did your posture of preparedness look like in that moment and how does it stand in contrast to your comfort zone of hospitality?
- How might God be inviting you to explore hospitality "where the magic happens" this Advent?

Scripture

Jesus said to his disciples, “For as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. In [those] days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day that Noah entered the ark. They did not know until the flood came and carried them all away. So will it be [also] at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be out in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come.” | **MT 24:37-44**



“Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come.”



[READ THE FULL SCRIPTURE.](#)



[LISTEN TO OUR ADVENT PLAYLIST.](#)

An Invitation to Lectio Divina: Listening with the Ear of the Heart

Rooted in the Christian monastic tradition, Lectio Divina is a way of awakening our hearts and coming to an experiential awareness of God. Latin for “divine reading,” it is the process of discerning a word of revelation from God through Scripture directly to the individual.

Using the scripture above, follow the four-fold movement listed below. Pause and listen deeply to what God might be saying to you this Advent. Begin by recognizing the presence of God. Settle, and intentionally release the chatter of your mind to God.

Lectio | Listening

Read the passage slowly and prayerfully, listening for a word or phrase that catches your attention — God’s word for you today.

Meditatio | Reflecting

Hear the passage a second time. This time notice any thought or reflection that emerges — listening for something that perhaps touched you a bit deeper.

Oratio | Responding

Listen a third time to the passage. Become aware of any prayer that rises up as you respond to the movement of God’s Spirit in your heart or mind.

Contemplatio | Resting

One final time, hear the passage again. Allow yourself to rest in sacred stillness with God, the One who simply loves being with you.



Advent Prayer

On tiptoe we stand, Lord Jesus
eagerly awaiting
your full revelation
always expecting you
to come some more.

Our hands and hearts
are open to your grace.
Our lives still waiting for
the fullness of your presence.
We are those who have been promised
a Kingdom, and we can never forget
Yet we have a foot in both worlds
and so we stumble.

But still we stand
on tiptoe
Owning our kingdom-loving hearts
and our earth-eyes
We lean forward
and hope.

MACRINA WIEDERKEHR

From "Seasons of Your Heart: Prayers & Reflections"

The Mutuality of Hospitality



In the English language, we delineate roles related to hospitality using the words host and guest; one gives, and the other receives. In our first CHA Advent Conversation, SSM St. Louis University's Cristina Stephenson, who is from Italy, shares that there is no word to distinguish the role of host and guest in the Italian language. The term "opside" represents both, emphasizing the shared experience of hospitality in Italian culture. Preparing a dish alongside loved ones is a special way to practice mutual hospitality

for Cristina. One of her favorite family recipes is Passatelli in Brodo, a simple comfort food made of parmesan, breadcrumbs, flour, melted butter, eggs, lemon zest and nutmeg. Having lived in the US for 45 years, she would ask her mother to prepare Passatelli in Brodo each time she visited Italy. To hear more on Cristina's practices of hospitality and the stories that surround her recipe, [listen to this week's Advent Conversation by clicking here.](#)



RECIPE SUBMITTED BY CRISTINA STEPHENSON

Director of Pastoral Care, SSM Health, St. Louis University Hospital



Passatelli Recipe



SERVES 2-3 PEOPLE

COOK TIME: 4 HOURS

For the Dough:

- 1 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup unseasoned bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest

For the Soup:

3 cups clear homemade or MSG-free canned chicken broth or beef broth (or a combination of both). It is okay to substitute clear vegetable broth.

Assembly:

Combine Parmesan cheese, bread crumbs and flour, nutmeg and lemon zest in a bowl and mix together. Add the beaten eggs and the cooled melted butter. Mix to the consistency of Play-Doh and knead for 5-10 minutes. Let it rest a couple of hours.

Break off small chunks to press through a potato ricer (use the disc or setting with the larger holes, about 1/6 inch holes work best). Cut the noodles with a knife and spread them on a cookie sheet. If they are not to be used immediately, freeze or dry in a single layer. Once frozen or dried, they can be placed in a bag.

Once ready to cook, drop them in boiling broth—as soon as they come to the surface, they are ready to eat!



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