

ADVENT 2022

WEEK FOUR

Hospitality:

—
THE GIFT THAT
CHANGES US



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.

“Sometimes when we speak before great things we shrink them down to size. When we speak of great things sometimes we swallow them whole, when instead we should be swallowed by them. Before all greatness be silent, in art, in music, and above all in faith.”

BARON VON HÜGEL

19th Century Mystic

WEEK FOUR

Hospitality: The Gift that Changes Us

It has been said that waiting is the fundamental posture of prayer. This sentiment is hardly encouraging when hopes are deferred and yearnings last longer than one fears. Waiting is just plain hard: prayers seem to fall short, faith gets pushed to its limit, and loss of control permeates the liminal space.

Zechariah knew the reality of waiting. For decades, he and Elizabeth ached for a child. Though infertile, they remained steadfast and obedient to God. But one day, the plot twist arrived. It began as Zechariah, a priest, was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary -- a chance of a lifetime. He was invited to enter the most sacred place within the temple where God's Spirit dwelled. Surely he carried his unanswered prayer with him. And while he was there, the angel appeared, reassuring his fear and confirming his prayer had indeed been heard: "Elizabeth will bear you a son."

Full of doubt, the encounter left Zechariah mute, with only gestures, but with a baby finally on the way.

The gifts of God's hospitality are radically abundant in this Gospel passage. The story's placement in Matthew's account is significant — the Lord is a promise keeper in prophecy, in human longing, in prayer, and in presence. But what do we do with the silence, Zechariah's sudden inability to speak and celebrate the news he had waited his whole life to share? While we may never know what transpired in his heart, might wordlessness have been the extraordinary gift? How might the story, and Zechariah's renewed belief in God, been different if words were permitted?

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Think of a particular encounter where you waited for something or someone for a long time and were met with the hospitality of another.

- How did that encounter make you feel known or offer you a sense of deep belonging?
- In that moment, how did hospitality impact your belief in God as a promise keeper?
- As one who extends God's faithful love and compassion to others in our healthcare ministry, how might your silence (or words) give witness to the Lord's faithfulness this week?



Scripture

"In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in years. Once when he was serving as priest in his division's turn before God, according to the practice of the priestly service, he was chosen by lot

to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense. Then, when the whole assembly of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was troubled by what he saw, and fear came upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John... Then Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel said to him in reply, "I am Gabriel, who stand before God. I was sent to speak to you and to announce to you this good news. But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time." | **LK 1:5-13; 18-20**

And the angel said to him in reply, "I am Gabriel, who stand before God. I was sent to speak to you and to announce to you this good news. But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time."



[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.

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.

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.

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

God in all your tender compassion

The dawn from on high it will break on us

Shining on those living in shadow

Guiding our feet into the way of peace

You will guide our feet

You will guide our feet

You will guide our feet into peace

“BENEDICTUS”

Based on Luke 1:68-78

Musical Setting Arranged by The Porter's Gate

A Welcoming Gift



When Coletta C. Barrett, VP of Mission at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center in Baton Rouge, got married, her mother-in-law gifted her a cookbook. Upon opening it, she noticed something special - handwritten notes suggesting modifications to several recipes. Coletta was surprised to find out, years later, that her father-in-law was the family cook and the one behind the handwritten suggestions.

As Coletta came to treasure this unique gift of hospitality extended to her as a wedding gift, the seafood gumbo quickly became one of her favorite recipes from the book. In addition to her father-in-law's thoughtful recipe modifications, preparing this dish is extra special when her sister and brother-in-law go "shrimping" and bring her their catch to use in the gumbo. [Join us for this week's Advent Conversation](#) as Coletta shares her thoughts on hospitality and the story behind the recipe.



RECIPE SUBMITTED BY COLETTA BARRETT

Vice President of Mission, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, FMOLHS

Shrimp Gumbo Recipe



SERVES 6-8 PEOPLE

COOK TIME: 2 HOURS

For the Gumbo:

2 pounds shrimp
2 tablespoons oil or bacon drippings (for the roux)
2 tablespoons flour
3 cups okra, chopped or tablespoon of filé
2 onions, chopped
2 tablespoons oil
¼ tablespoon thyme and rosemary
1 can tomatoes
2 quarts water
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon salt
3 pods garlic (optional)
Red pepper (optional)
Celery
Green Pepper

Assembly:

Peel shrimp uncooked and devein. Make roux (dark) of flour and oil. Add shrimp to this for a few minutes stirring constantly. Set aside. Smother okra and onions in oil. Add tomatoes when okra is nearly cooked. Then add water, bay leaf, garlic, salt, and pepper. Add shrimp and roux to this. Cover and cook slowly for 30 minutes.

If okra is not used, add gumbo filé, ½ cup of worcestershire after turning off the heat.

Serve with rice.



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