



COLORS *of* ADVENT

A REFLECTION-GUIDED ADULT COLORING BOOK
FOR THE SEASON OF ADVENT



CHA would like to thank Ann M. Garrido, D.Min., for authoring the 2019 Advent and Christmas reflections.

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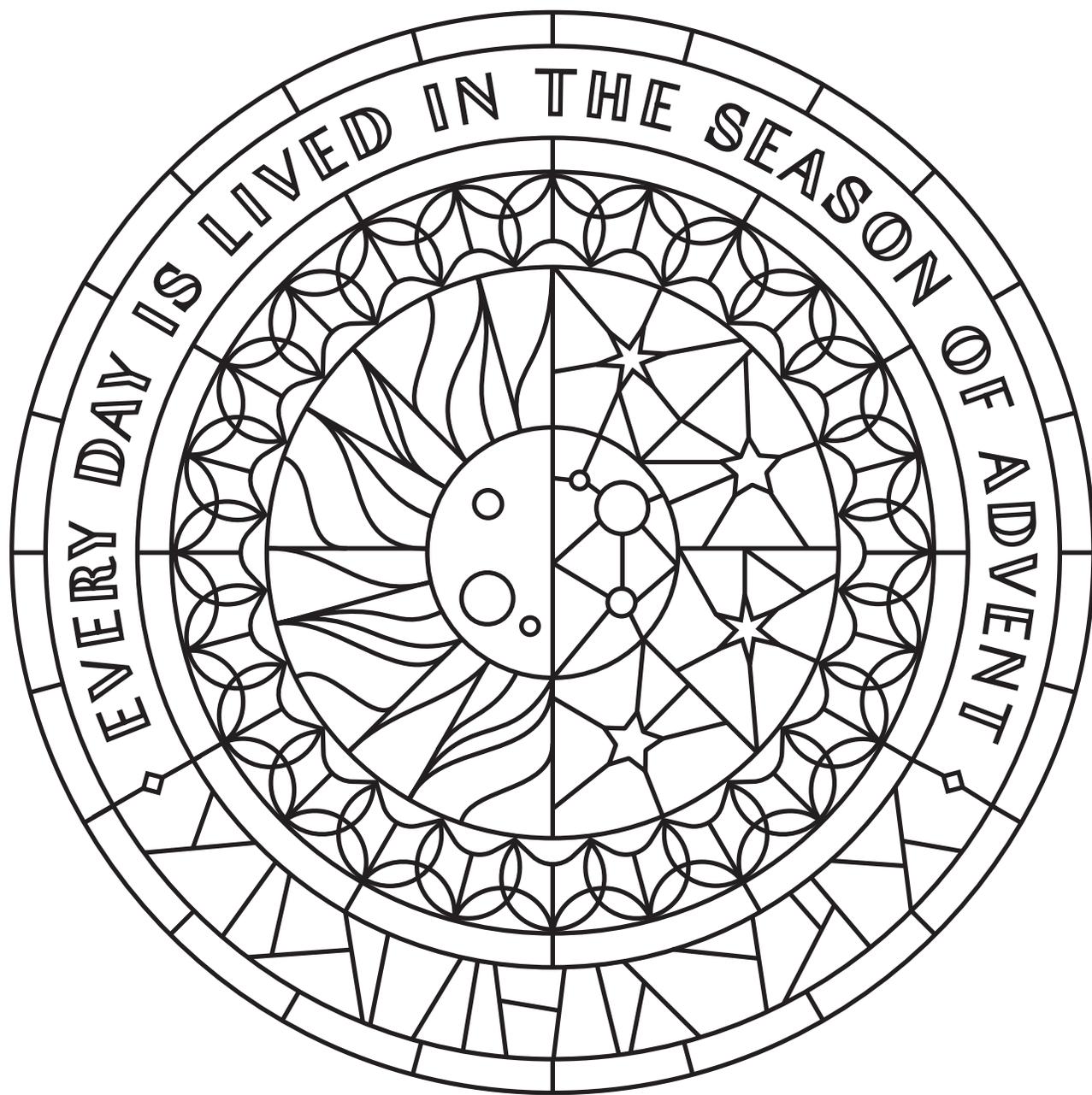
IN THOSE DAYS A DECREE WENT OUT FROM CAESAR AUGUSTUS THAT THE WHOLE WORLD SHOULD BE ENROLLED. THIS WAS THE FIRST ENROLLMENT, WHEN QUIRINIUS WAS GOVERNOR OF SYRIA. SO ALL WENT TO BE ENROLLED, EACH TO HIS OWN TOWN.

And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, *“Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”*

And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

*“Glory to God in the highest
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*



Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

MATTHEW 24:42

ADVENT WEEK 1

Keep Awake Therefore



WE OFTEN HEAR ADVENT

is a time for “getting ready.” But getting ready for what? The most common response is “Christmas ... Jesus’ birthday.” And, yes, that is true. There are gifts to be bought; decorations to be hung; cookies to be baked—all of which are signs of preparing for a great birthday party.

But as the readings at the beginning of Advent make clear, this season is not about re-living the past, pretending that we are getting ready for Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem. Jesus was already born in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago. His birth inaugurated a new moment in history, the beginning of God’s reign—sometimes also called the Kingdom of God. In his preaching, he announced God’s dream for our world. In his healing miracles, he gave us a glimpse of what it would look like. In the way he ate, he let us know God’s kingdom would be like a feast at which all were welcome. In the way he prayed, he taught us to long (as he did) for God’s dream to be realized here on earth as it already was in the heavens. All that the Christian Gospels record happened a long time ago. We are not waiting for Jesus.

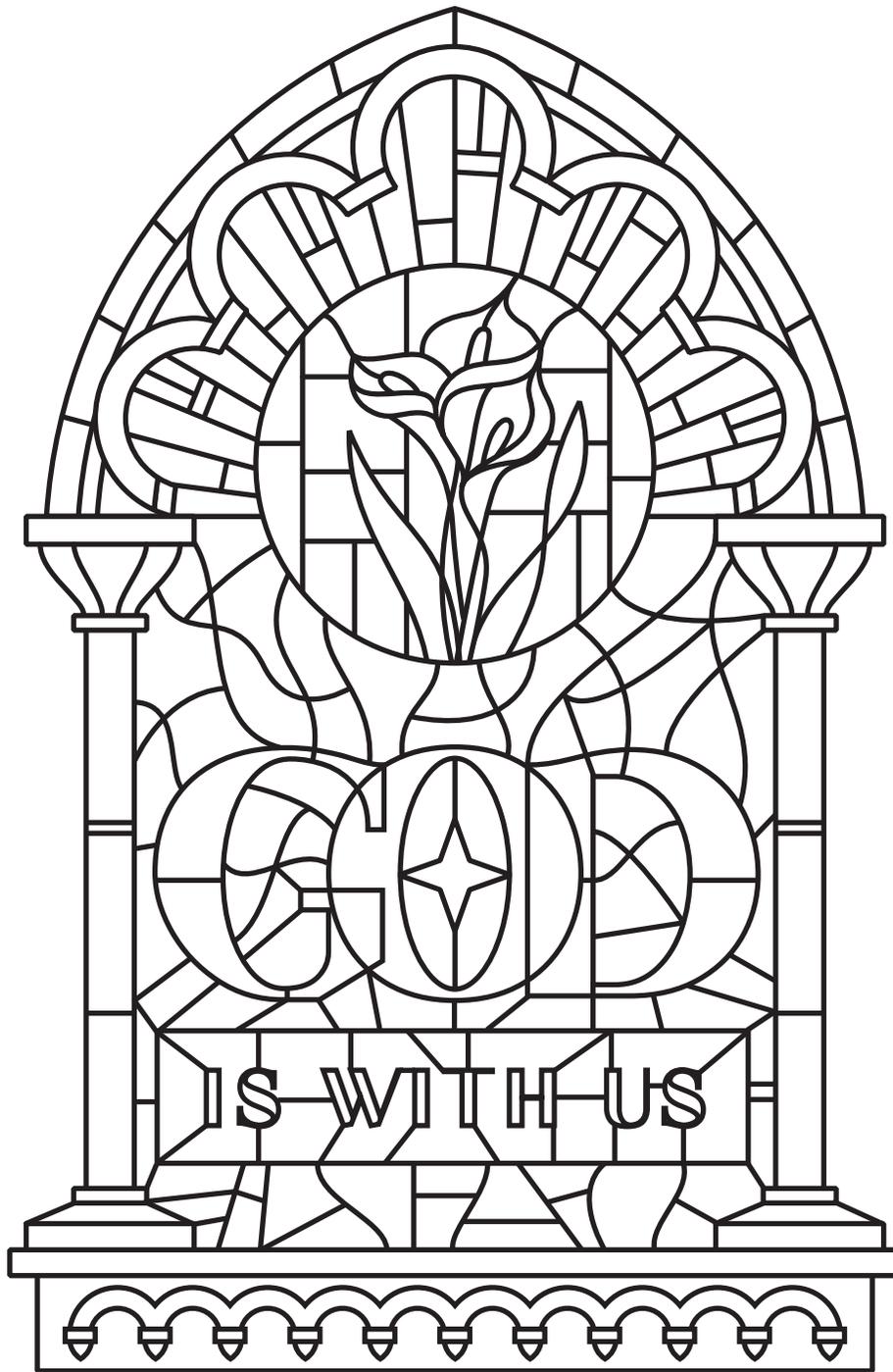
What we are still waiting for in 2019 is the Kingdom of God that Jesus came for to be fully realized, because—quite frankly—it has not. Jesus has been born in Bethlehem, but—in the words of the medieval saint Meister Eckhart—he’s not yet been born in our hearts. God is still waiting for us to collaborate wholeheartedly with God’s vision, like

Jesus did. Still waiting for each and every one of us to say, “Hey, let me lend my gifts and talents to help make the world the kind of place that You, God, dream it to be.”

The great birthday party that we are supposed to be getting ready for in this season is a birthday party for the Kingdom of God. And the signs that we are getting ready for *that* party are not gifts and decorations and cookies, but rather the kinds of signs that Jesus did in his lifetime: teaching and healing and feeding people and praying.

Although it may sound odd to say, for those of us in Catholic health care, *every day* is lived in the season of Advent. The very reason why we have Catholic hospitals and nursing homes and clinics in the first place is that *we* want the world to look like the place that God dreams it to be, and are willing to contribute our time and energy, sweat and tears specifically to the healing dimension of that larger vision. Every act of care that we offer to a patient, every morsel of food we spoon, every bed pan we clean, every shot we give, every bit of research we contribute, every community partnership we build, every move we make toward alleviating suffering and creating well-being is a way we are doing our part in “getting ready” for the Kingdom of God.

This Advent, let’s open our hearts more and more to Jesus’ message and recommit ourselves through our daily work to help bring the Kingdom of God about. There is no better way to get ready for Christmas.



And coming to her, he said, 'Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.'

LUKE 1:28

ADVENT WEEK 2

The Lord Is with You



BEST WE SHOULD EVER think that we are too small or insignificant to help bring about the Kingdom of God, we should remember Mary.

Mary was a young woman from the tiny town of Nazareth, a village so small that some suggest it had a population of around ninety. She was likely between fourteen and seventeen years of age, not even married yet, when a messenger arrived bearing a most unexpected greeting: “Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.” She must have thought the messenger out of his mind. Here? In *Nazareth*? With *me*??

But, taking a step back, and looking at the story that the Bible tells as a whole, she need not have been surprised. This seems to be a pattern with God: choosing the smallest of people in the smallest of places and saying, “That’s where I want to be. That’s who I want to work with me.” God asks ridiculously big things of these smallest of people, but consistently assures them that they need not be afraid, because God will be with them.

In the field of Catholic health care, we know a lot about feeling in over our heads. We understand well what it means to feel small in front of very big requests: figuring out how to care for those who don’t have insurance. Dealing with diseases for which

there is yet no cure. Managing market stressors. Talking to family members about end-of-life issues. On any given day of the week, we may be tempted to think, “Surely there must be others out there better equipped to handle this situation than we are, here in ... (You can fill in the blank).” And maybe there are. But, so many times, we discover that God does not think our smallness an obstacle. Indeed, it’s what God treasures most about us. Thus, God continues to make mighty “asks,” inadequate though we may feel. Our greatest (maybe *only*) consolation comes in knowing “the Lord is with us.”

That day in Nazareth, Mary chose to put her trust in God’s promise. She said “yes” to the crazy request that she—of all people—become the mother of the one who would usher in God’s Kingdom. She gave her whole self over to collaborating with God’s vision for the world and it changed her life forever. Indeed, it changed the world forever. The God who promised to be *with her* became Emmanuel—a Hebrew phrase meaning “God is *with us*.”

How would your life today be different if you were able to trust that God is truly *with you* and will not ask of you anything that the two of you cannot handle together? What situation would you address with more courage? What task would you be able to more fully embrace? Ask God for a bit more of Mary’s trust today, and step forward to see what happens.



*What did you go out to the desert to see—a reed swaying in the wind? ...
Someone dressed in fine garments? ... Then what did you go out to see?
A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.*

LUKE 7:24-26

ADVENT WEEK 3

Be Grateful for John



BESIDES JESUS, NO PERSON appears in the readings of the Advent season more than John the Baptist. The two men, although they lived at the same time, could not have been more different. John lived in the desert, dressed in camel fur and eating wild locusts. Jesus' dress seems to have had nothing distinctive about it and he was known to dine at table and enjoy wine. John had a fiery personality. Jesus, most of the time, seems to have been more subdued. Both men had fallen in love with God's vision for the world—God's Kingdom. Both wanted to see that vision realized. Both were such effective preachers that they drew lots of followers. Some people who study the Bible think it possible that the two would have been natural rivals, each competing for the same followers. This might be why the Gospel of Luke goes to such efforts to say that they were cousins, members of the same family. It's meant to give us a clue that even though they were very different and maybe preached about the Kingdom of God in very different ways, they were both playing on the same team and ultimately pulling in the same direction.

The mission of Catholic health care in today's world is vast and complex. It's sometimes hard to know what is the best way to move forward in fulfilling that mission. We work on teams filled with lots of different personalities. We have different opinions about how to respond to the challenges before us. But it helps now and then to step back and remember,

we are meant to work together as "cousins" who share a common love for the Kingdom of God in the midst of our diversity.

In the readings of this week, we remember that John faced a lot of disillusionment toward the end of his life. He'd been arrested by the local ruler and was being held in prison. He was wondering whether all the work he'd done in his life had value. He sent a few of his followers to Jesus to find out what was going on in the Jesus camp. Was there still reason to hope, even though Jesus' way of going about the mission was so different than his own? Jesus assures John's followers that there was reason to hope, but more than that, he praises John as a true prophet. Indeed, more than a prophet. He goes on to say there is no one greater than John. One senses Jesus' heart overflowing with gratitude for this man, so unlike himself yet fully his partner in mission.

This week, call to mind one of your co-workers who perhaps sees things very differently than you do. See if you can begin to think of this person less as a competitor and more as a "cousin," who perhaps wants many of the same things that you do, even if this person has a different notion of how to go about getting those things. Consider this person's strengths and what you admire about her or him. Look for an opportunity to publicly praise this person if possible. And pray that God might show you how best to work together for the good of the common mission.



*This is how the birth of Jesus came about.
When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived
together, she was found with child through the Holy Spirit.*

MATTHEW 1:18

Learning to Pause



IN MANY FAMILIES, birthdays are celebrated each year by sharing the story of the day that the birthday honoree was born and the events leading up to that day. Each year in the week immediately leading up to Christmas, the Church has a similar practice. We listen to stories of Jesus' birth from two different Gospels: the Gospel of Luke, which shares the story mostly from the point of view of Jesus' mother, Mary, and the Gospel of Matthew, which shares the story mostly from the perspective of Mary's fiancé, Joseph.

In just a few short verses from Matthew's gospel, we are led to imagine how uncomfortable, even devastating, the whole discovery of Mary's pregnancy must have been for Joseph. In a village so small, everyone would know once Mary began to show and the rumor mill would have run wild. The first assumption of family and neighbors would have been that Joseph himself had violated Mary, trashing his reputation as a righteous man. Joseph, who knew this was not the case, was surely furious with Mary for sleeping with another man, but if he defended himself, it would put Mary's life in jeopardy. And, if he didn't defend himself, everyone would continue to think ill of him. Meanwhile, all Mary has to say for herself is an unbelievable story about an angel. Consider the confusion, doubt and torment Joseph would have felt. The scene is ripe for some kind of outburst or violence.

It isn't hard to empathize with Joseph, is it? Even if we've not been in quite such a heart-wrenching situation in our own intimate relationships, as persons involved in health care, we certainly have witnessed

trauma. We've witnessed people who've suffered great shocks of loss and grief and disorientation—those for whom events can never be reversed, making it impossible to ever be the same again. We've seen the kind of outbursts or violence that can result. Many of us have probably at some point in time or another been on the receiving end of a person's screams of rage—all of which makes Joseph's response to Mary's pregnancy the more noteworthy.

In the midst of all the drama of the situation, Joseph decides not to escalate the tension. Though his own honor is at stake, he doesn't "call Mary out." He decides to do the most compassionate thing for both of them—to quietly break off the relationship. But, remaining open to God's direction, he changes course after having a powerful dream that tells him not to be afraid. He allows family and neighbors to think what they will and goes ahead and marries his pregnant fiancé, taking the child-of-mysterious-origin as his own.

In the midst of the personal and work dramas we find ourselves wrapped in, perhaps we can take Joseph as our model. We, too, can pause and de-escalate the tension. Rather than reacting, we can respond, taking a step back to consider what compassion would look like in the situation—both compassion for the person or persons in crisis, and compassion for ourselves. We can try to remain open to God's voice that might gently direct us in a different way than we would have first thought to go. During a time of year that often feels so frenzied, we can ask Joseph to be our guide.



*In those days, Caesar Augustus published a decree ordering
a census of the whole world.*

LUKE 2:1

Christmas



WHEN OUR SON WAS

growing up, every year during the Christmas season, we would set up a simple creche with Mary and Joseph and Jesus and all the usual Christmas characters. I'd allow him to move the figures as I read the story of Jesus' birth from the Bible. One day, when he was around four, he came to ask me to read the story to him again. I was in the middle of something, so I told him to go set up the creche and I would be over. When I arrived a few minutes later, I found he had set up all the figures, but that our globe was sitting right in the middle of the scene. Thinking he was being silly, I told him the globe needed to go before I could read. Looking disappointed, he returned it to the shelf, and I began to read, "In those days, Caesar Augustus published a decree ordering a census of the whole world." He tugged at my sleeve and asked, "Now can I get the globe?"

Already at the age of four, he had intuited a central theme of the Christian gospel: the coming of Jesus is an event of global significance. Jesus arrived in history at a time when everyone was on the move. He was born in a particular place at a particular time, but the Kingdom of God that he came to announce was not just for his own town or even for those who shared his language or faith tradition. What he had to say and what he was to do had implications for the whole world.

We get clues of this in the story of his birth when we hear of "magi from the East" coming to see him. In his adult life, we hear stories of Roman soldiers seeking him out and a Syrophenician woman asking him to heal her daughter. In the decades immediately following his death and resurrection, we

know that news of Jesus quickly spread all around the Mediterranean Sea, into Ethiopia, perhaps even as far as India. Those who had no idea where the tiny dot of Nazareth was on the map, nor any idea about the long hope of Jesus' people for a coming Kingdom of God, suddenly found themselves wrapped up in dreaming with God about what earth could look like:

- ◆ A place where the hungry would have enough to eat;
- ◆ Where the sick would be healed and the suffering comforted;
- ◆ A place where the lonely would be included;
- ◆ Where death would no longer triumph over life.

People far and wide began to see themselves as part of God's greater plan and find ways that they could contribute to its coming about.

Our Catholic hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and community partnerships continue to witness today Jesus' global impact. The diversity of our associates and patients and residents is a sign that the Kingdom of God that Jesus inaugurated is still powerfully alive. We've each been wrapped in a vision of a just and "whole" world that crisscrosses nations and languages and even religious practice, but makes a daily difference in millions of lives.

So today, let us light the candles, sing our favorite songs and feast with gratitude. The Jesus born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago is still being born this day in our hearts—giving us energy and imagination, courage and hope to keep working for the Kingdom of God in our own time.

Gloria in excelsis Deo!



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