

ADVENT 2022

WEEK THREE

Hospitality:

POSSIBILITY BEYOND
EXPECTATION



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.

**Called to a destiny more momentous
than any in all of Time,
she did not quail,
only asked
a simple, "How can this be?"
and gravely, courteously,
took to heart the angel's reply,
the astounding ministry
she was offered:
to bear in her womb
Infinite weight and lightness;
to carry
in hidden, finite inwardness**

**nine months of Eternity; to contain
in slender vase of being,
the sum of power —
in narrow flesh,
the sum of flight.**

**Then bring to birth,
push out to air, a Man-child
needing, like any other,
milk and love —**

but who was God.

DENISE LEVERTOV
Excerpt from "Annunciation"

WEEK THREE

Hospitality: Possibility Beyond Expectation

"Do not be always wanting everything to turn out as you think it should, but rather as God pleases, then you will be undisturbed and thankful in your prayer." These timeless words of wisdom are attributed to Abba Nilus, Desert Father of the fourth century. And three weeks into the Advent season, expectation is mounting, isn't it?

Mary, mother of God, the one Matthew says the angel greeted as "favored one" — Mary was free from expectation. As the narrative recounts, Mary's faithful obedience to the angel was extraordinary: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Mary's yes to be unyoked to expectation was far beyond the limits of her teenage wisdom - and her biological possibility. Yet she was the one the Lord chose, unmistakably, a virgin without financial means or status, the one who would carry the seed of impossibility in her womb and birth it into being: the Son of the Most High, the Son of God, Jesus.

One must wonder about the divine faith that implanted within her. What enabled a vulnerable young virgin to say yes with such willingness? What fierce knowing did she cling to? Mary is one to make much of. Besides Jesus himself, has there been another human whose yielding faith and radical hospitality can be contested?

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

—
"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

"On ne voit bien qu'avec le coeur, l'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux."

"Sólo se ve bien con el corazón; lo esencial es invisible a los ojos."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, The Little Prince

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

- Pause for a moment and reflect: when was the last time an outcome defied your expectations? What was that like?
- How does it feel to consider Mary's expectation-less yes in light of all you carry this season?
- How might God use you to birth impossibility into being? At work? At home? In your community? Within yourself?

Scripture

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her. | **LK 1:26-38**



"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! See, I am coming to dwell among you, says the Lord." Zec. 2:14



[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

As this season of preparation continues, Holy God who is with us,
may we lean into every moment of our days to redeem the time,
to make the most of our every moment.

May we prepare the visible Body of Christ, our community,
to receive your eternal approach and your loving embrace.
With our faces turned to you, we await your holy descent, and ask,
Lord, that you hear our prayer, offered in humility:

That despite the roar of our days, our hearts might grow still.
That glimpsing the quiet cove, we may seek you in that stillness.
That resting in your presence, our hearts might be prepared to hear you.
That the angel of God might visit the chambers of our hearts.
That the angel of God might say to us, "Rejoice."
That we might hear, and truly respond in joy.
That the angel of God might say to us, "Receive."
That the servant of God might respond, "Let it be as you say."
That our hearts might become fertile wombs in which new life begins.
That we may apprehend the infant life within.
That we might embrace that infant life.
That we may walk with care to bring about new birth.
That we may witness the seed of God bearing Holy Fruit.

As the season of Incarnation approaches, as we prepare to receive Life himself,
may we taste and see how our own lives, the life of the world,
and the very breath of the universe flow to us from the Holy One made flesh.

Lord, hear our prayer.

SCOTT CAIRNS

From "God with Us: Rediscovering the Meaning of Christmas"
Ed. Greg Pennoyer and Gregory Wolfe

Joy in Simplicity



For Esmerelda “Mela” Perez, Director of Community Health Services at CHRISTUS, the Advent season is about focusing on the things that matter most – time with family, reminiscing about old memories and creating new ones. Having recently lost her mother, one of Mela’s cherished memories is her mom heading to the kitchen to make bunuelos, a delicious light and airy fritter fried to perfection and dusted with cinnamon and sugar.

Mela remembers her mom making stacks and stacks of bunuelos, some for the family and others to share with visitors as gifts, always making sure to let the kids enjoy the first few. We are grateful to Mela for sharing this special recipe with us and for her excellent advice to those who make bunuelos: “eat a few of them right away!” [Join us for this week’s Advent Conversation to hear more about this recipe and Mela’s thoughts on hospitality.](#)



RECIPE SUBMITTED BY MELA PEREZ

Director of Community Health, CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health System

Buñuelos Recipe



SERVES 6-8 PEOPLE

COOK TIME: 1 HOUR



For the Dough:

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cups warm water
4 tablespoons oil, plus 2 or more cups for frying

For the Cinnamon Sugar Topping:

½ tablespoon granulated sugar
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

Assembly:

1. Mix all-purpose flour, baking powder and salt in a large bowl.
2. Add warm water and 4 tablespoons oil to contents of bowl.
3. Transfer dough onto a flat surface and knead dough for about 10 minutes.
4. Roll dough into a ball, place in bowl and cover with a kitchen towel for 30 minutes.
5. In the meantime, cover a large plate with paper towels, fill a large sauté pan with 1 to 2 inches of frying oil and make the cinnamon sugar topping. Set aside.
6. Make 8 separate dough balls. On lightly floured surface, roll out each ball into an 8 to 10-inch circle with rolling pin.
7. Heat oil to 350°. Fry each dough circle for about 60 seconds, turning once, until golden brown on both sides. Transfer to prepared plate to drain any excess oil.
8. Combine granulated sugar and ground cinnamon in a bowl. Sprinkle heavily on fried buñuelos.



ST. LOUIS OFFICE

4455 Woodson Road
St. Louis, MO 63134
(314) 427-2500

WASHINGTON OFFICE

1625 Eye Street NW, Suite 550
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 296-3993

CHAUSA.ORG