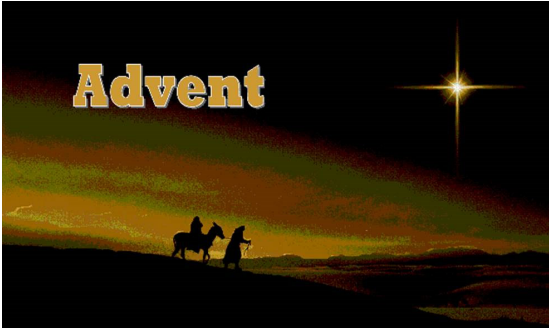


# ADVENT MEDITATIONS WEEK TWO



This week's Henri Nouwen Advent Meditations are excerpts from: "Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen," Ligouri Publications, 2004.

## Day 8:

### "Compassion Demands Solidarity"

If you would ask the Desert Fathers why solitude gives birth to compassion, they would say, "Because it makes us die to our neighbor." ... To die to our neighbors means to stop judging them, to stop evaluating them, and thus to become free to be compassionate..."

"Judging Others": Luke 6:37-38

#### Prayer:

"Lord, endow us with discernment so that we might recognize the seeds of harshness in our lives. Help us to overcome this harshness with the heart of compassion, seeing then your presence in all human beings.

AMEN."

#### Advent Action:

"A follower of Saint Anthony, Abba Moses, gives this instruction: "Do not let dislike dominate your heart." Make a short list of those whom you dislike, even surreptitiously. Choose one person to expunge from your negative thoughts. . "

*"Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen," Ligouri Publications, 2004, (p 16-17).*

## Day 9: "Mary, Our Mother"

"Mary creates space for us where we can become children as Jesus became a child...It is precisely this childhood that Mary wants us to claim. She who offered an immaculate space for God to take on human flesh wants to offer us a space where we can be reborn as Jesus was born. With the same heart that loved Jesus, she wants to love us. It is a heart that will not make us wonder anxiously whether we are truly loved. It is a heart that has not been marked by the infidelities of the human race and so will never bring wounds to those who sleep peacefully there."

"Children of God" Meditation: 1 John 3:1-2

#### Prayer:

"Lord, your mother, Mary, and her "yes" to God's request is central to the Advent mystery. Help us to become her children and yours, so we may be enveloped in the confidence of being truly loved and cared for by you both. Make it possible for us to say our "yes" to our invitations, no matter how reluctantly we may do so. AMEN"

#### Advent Action

"Place flowers in front of our Lady's statue or picture in honor of her major role in our salvation story..."

*"Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen," Ligouri Publications, 2004, (p 18-19).*

## Day 10: "Passionate Waiting"

"If it is true that God in Jesus Christ is waiting for our response to divine love, then we can discover a whole new perspective on how to wait in life, solitude and community forms the basis of Christian life..."

"Waiting for the Lord" Meditation:        Isaiah 25: 6, 8-9

Prayer:

"Lord, our Saving Light who came to set us free, shine upon us in your glory. May your light provide illumination for us so that we recognize all those who need our help, however much, however little. Keep us from straying into the works of darkness, wipe away our tears, and grant us your light and blessings.

AMEN"

Advent Action:

"Obedience to God's plan for us should really be unqualified. For today, give a "yes, always" instead of a "yes, but" to God's requests..."

*Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen," Ligouri Publications, 2004, (p 20-21).*

## Day 11: "Claiming True Peace"

"Keep your eyes on the prince of peace, the one who doesn't cling to his divine power; the one who refuses to turn stones into bread, jump from great heights, and rule with great power...; the one who touches the lame, the crippled, and the blind, the one who speaks words of forgiveness and encouragement...Keep your eyes on him who becomes poor with the poor, weak with the weak. He is the source of all peace."

"Blessings Abound" Meditation:        Colossians 3:12-15

Prayer:

"Lord, help us to make our way to Bethlehem, to the peace of the Christ Child that withstood even the humility of his birth in a stable. Let us seek harmony in our lives as the angels did when they announced the Christ Child's birth in perfect praise. AMEN"

Advent Action:

"Liturgical music can often help us pray and can even help to overcome the chaos of a tense situation at home or elsewhere. ...find and listen to a CD or tape of religious music that expresses the calm serenity of waiting for the Christ Child..."

*Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen," Ligouri Publications, 2004, (p 22-23).*

## Day 12: "Walking in the Presence of God"

"We must continually remind ourselves that the first commandment requiring us to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind is indeed the first. I wonder if we really believe this. It seems that in fact we live as if we should give as much of our heart, soul and mind as possible to our fellow human beings, while trying hard not to forget God...But Jesus' claim is much more radical. He asks for a single-minded commitment to God and God alone. God wants all of our heart, all of our mind, and all of our soul."

**"Love is All" Meditation:** Matthew 22:34-38

### Prayer:

"Lord, you have revealed your love to me by coming into this world as a helpless child, human in all except sin. Let me respond to this great gift of love by making your love a reality in this world. Keep me rooted in your love and let me flower into a new person transformed by the giving and receiving of your grace.

AMEN"

### Advent Action

"Often we remain so mired in the perceived sadness of the "old tapes" running through our heads that we cannot acknowledge God's love for us. Pick one "old tape": a resentment, a belittlement, a loss, and pack it away permanently in exchange for the shelter of a loved and loving God-being."

*Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen," Ligouri Publications, 2004, (p 24-25).*

## Day 13: "Real Listening"

"The word "listening" in Latin is *obedire*, and *audire* means "listening with great attention." That is where the word "obedience" comes from. Jesus is called the obedient one, that means the listener. The Latin word for not listening, being deaf, is *surdus*. If you are absolutely not listening, that is where the word "absurd" comes from. So, it might be interesting to note that somebody who is not listening is leading an absurd life...."

**"A Good Shepherd" Meditation:** Psalm 23:1-4, 6

### Prayer:

"Lord, help us to rein in all the distractions that bombard us daily. Let us pray our full attention to you. Let us truly listen to your requests. Keep us from the shortsighted absurdity of bestowing our attention on the wrong things. AMEN"

### Advent Action:

"A prisoner of war spent part of his captivity in an effort to remember all the words of the Twenty-Third Psalm. Often, in profoundly difficult situations, we are at a loss for words to pray. Memorize a prayer that you feel will be helpful to you in times of trouble"

*Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen," Ligouri Publications, 2004, (p 26-27).*

## Day 14: "The Sacred Encounter"

"I am deeply moved by the simple and mysterious encounter [of the Visitation]... Two women meet each other and affirm in each other the promise given to them. The humanly impossible has happened to them. God has come to them to begin the salvation promised through the ages. Through these two women God has decided to change the course of history. Who could ever understand? Who could ever believe it? Who could ever let it happen... For three months Mary and Elizabeth live together and encourage each other to truly accept the motherhood given to them. Mary's presence makes Elizabeth more fully aware of becoming the mother of the "prophet of the Most High" (Lk 1:76), and Elizabeth's presence allows Mary to grow in the knowledge of becoming the Mother of the "Son of the Most High (Lk 1:32)..."

**"Coming Together in God's Grace" Meditation:** Luke 1:39-41, 56

### Prayer:

"Lord, as we prepare for your birth as Mary's Son, may we find our own "Elizabeth" to be a refuge of wisdom, comfort, and joy. Let us acknowledge to you that we are never too old, never too filled with effects of sin, never too far away to receive you and your Mother with all hospitality and trust. AMEN"

### Advent Action:

"Commemorate Mary of the Visitation, Handmaid of the Lord, by offering gentle assistance to someone in your environment who is in need: of praise, of a good word, of day-brightening laughter."

*Advent and Christmas Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen," Ligouri Publications, 2004, (p 28-29).*