

Advent week #2

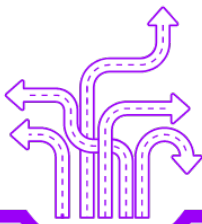
Peace



December 8-14, 2019

“Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.”

~Rainer Maria Rilke



Last week, I invited you to reflect on hope as we entered the Advent season together. Now, as we light a second candle on the Advent wreath, I invite you to reflect on peace.

Reflecting on peace can take many forms. You could spend time reflecting on peace in the world, peace in your family, or internal peace. It depends on where you are right now in your spiritual journey. To me, peace is not about solving all the issues that bring disquiet to our hearts and minds because there will always be something else that will do that. Instead, it is about being able to sit with the disquiet, knowing that you are supported, loved, and peace is just around the corner.

As you enter into this week, consider the following questions:

- In what areas of my life do I feel unsettled or uncertain? Where am I seeking peace?
- Where do I see the need for peace in my family? Peace in my friendships? Peace in my community?
- What grace(s) can I ask from God as I seek peace in my own heart and the hearts of those around me?

Consider engaging with others in conversation about their own desires for peace as you move through this week.

Lord, my family, my friends, the world, and my own heart seek your peace as we move towards a new year. Grant me the grace to recognize You in the peaceful moments of my day and even in the disquiet of my heart. Lead me to seek peace and share that peace with others. In your name, I pray. Amen.



A DAILY EXAMEN ON PEACE

The examen is a daily reflection created by St. Ignatius Loyola that invites a person to examine their day - looking intentionally for where they found God and where God was more difficult to find. Consider praying this Examen daily during week #2 of the Advent Season.

I spend a moment quieting myself, inviting the holy Spirit to help me examine my day.

I look back on my day since I woke up. Who or what were signs of peace for me today?

I pause to thank God for each of these tangible signs of peace in my life.

When was it hard for me to feel at peace today?

I ask God for forgiveness for any of my reactions today that might have lessened the peace of others.

I look towards the rest of my day (or tomorrow). What do I need from God in order to experience a renewed sense of peace?

I pause to ask God for what I need.

Lord, as I end this examen, help me to see that even in small ways, I can increase the peace of others.

Amen

“When I say it's you I like, I'm talking about that part of you that knows that life is far more than anything you can ever see or hear or touch. That deep part of you that allows you to stand for those things without which humankind cannot survive. Love that conquers hate, peace that rises triumphant over war, and justice that proves more powerful than greed.”

— Fred Rogers



A DAILY REFLECTION ON SCRIPTURE

Quotes are chosen from the daily Scripture readings from the Catholic Lectionary. Daily readings can be found at uscgb.org.

Sunday: “I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Mt 3:11)

Often asking for forgiveness can provide me with the peace I seek. What do I need forgiveness for this week?

Monday: “Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” (Lk 1: 38)

How does Mary's peace-filled reply to the angel inspire my own “yes” to God?

Tuesday: “If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go in search of the stray?... In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost.” (Mt 18:14)

If I am lost, God will find me. How does this knowledge bring me peace?

Wednesday: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Mt 11:28).

Jesus invites me to seek rest in Him. How can I seek rest in the Lord today?

Thursday: “Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse.” (Mt 7: 24-25)

What is my faith built on? What can I do to strengthen it?

Friday: “For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.” (Lk 1: 44-45)

How can the “yeses” of others to God help bring me peace today?

Saturday: “The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they said, ‘Look, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is vindicated by her works.” (Mt 11:19)

The Lord faced opposition and moments of disquiet in his ministry. Still he sought to love others. How does knowing this bring me peace today?