

ADVENT HOUSE GROUPS 2025

SESSION 3



The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. ISAIAH 9:2

Enter the Sacred Space (5 minutes)

The leader invites all to enter into a prayerful presence to the Holy Spirit, whose guidance we seek during our time together. During this prayerful silence, we give thanks for the opportunity of this time together, for the presence and gift of each other and ask for the grace of the Spirit to flow unimpeded during the session. All pray in silence for all, that each may receive light and healing

Pray and Share (15 minutes)

O God,
send forth your Holy Spirit
into our hearts that we might perceive,
into our minds that we might remember,
into our souls that we might meditate.
Inspire us to speak with love, holiness,
tenderness and mercy.
Teach, guide and direct our thoughts and senses
from beginning to end.
May your grace help us to see with your eyes
and to act with your love and light in our hearts.
May we be strengthened with wisdom from on high
for the sake and glory of your kingdom.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

In a period of calm and a space of trust, each one of us is invited to share briefly one thing that has happened in the past week or your hopes for the week ahead. It could be one thing that has given you cause for concern, something shared during the last time you met as a group or something that has given you cause to celebrate.

In this moment of peace and fellowship, we pray for the good of the group. Each member is invited to offer up any personal intentions. We also pray for the good of the Church, for wisdom in our country and for the common good. Let us also bring to mind the poor, the sick and those who have died. We join together in praying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen

Spiritual Reading and Contemplation (15 minutes)

What follows is the practice of spiritual reading and journaling that we can choose to generously share with each other. Each week includes a scripture passage, a poem and a picture. Read through the materials once as a group and then each person reflects on the material in silence.

- *Select one or more of the items to reflect on*
- *If desired write your thoughts in the space provided*

Scripture Reading

Matthew 11:2-11 - Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?

At that time: When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'

And Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.'

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

'What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

"Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you."

'Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.'

When I experience doubt or uncertainty, how do I seek reassurance from God?

Where do I see the signs of Christ's presence in my life and in the world today?

How open am I to recognizing Jesus when He comes in unexpected ways?

What does it mean for me to be a "messenger" preparing the way of the Lord?

Poem

November Sonnet by Elizabeth Jennings

Spirit of place. Spirit of time. Re-form
The rugged oaks and chestnuts. Now they stand
Naked and pallid giants out of storm
And out of sorts. It is the Autumn's end

And this is Winter brought in by All Saints
Fast followed by All Souls to keep us in
Touch with chill and death. Each re-acquaints
Us with the year's end. Yet we now begin

A life of realism, watching out
For a red sunset, grateful for a dawn
Of rich light now. Tall shadows step and strut

Facing the big wind daily coming on
Faster. This is the season of right doubt
While that elected child waits to be born.

The autumn trees with their ballast of leaves are out of sorts in the stormy winds but having shed their leaves they accept the storms and step and strut. Are there things you need to shed when you are feeling out of sorts so you can endure the storms of life?

When in your life have you experienced doubt as something that seemed right?

Picture

The Adoration of the Kings by Pieter Bruegel the elder



The claustrophobic scene of the Magi and crowds of onlookers perhaps reminds us that Jesus has come for all people, including the armed soldiers who ominously stand in the background.

Journal Notes

Optionally use this page to record your thoughts during your time of reflection

Conversation and Sharing (15 minutes)

Each person is invited to briefly share any thought or insight related to the materials that came to them during their time of reflection. This could be in the form of a simple phrase, a prayer that came to mind, an image or any other insight. It is also permissible to simply respond with silence and no one is obliged to speak.

Conclusion (5 minutes)

The leader can optionally summarise the main insights that have been shared and the meeting concludes with prayer:

Heavenly Father, as we have gathered in the warmth of this house, we thank you for this season of Advent, a time of reflection, anticipation, and renewal. We ask for the grace to see Christmas in a new light. Help us to look beyond the familiar and seek the deeper meaning of your son's birth. May we see Christ in every act of kindness, every gesture of love, and every moment of stillness. Open our hearts to the wonder of your presence in unexpected places—whether in the humble manger, within the experience of others or within our own hearts.

Amen