



2020 Advent Calendar

No Room: An Advent Journey with People Experiencing Homelessness

Sunday 29 First Sunday of Advent

Simone Weil wrote, “Attention is the same thing as prayer.” Over half a million people go homeless on a single night in the United States. How will you attend to people experiencing homelessness each day during Advent?

Monday 30 Place a box near your Advent wreath. Each day of Advent add a canned or other nonperishable food item that you will donate to a food bank at the end of the season. It’s frequently after the holidays that food banks are most in need.

Tuesday 1 Contact your parish and see if they would include an intercession for those experiencing homelessness at each liturgy for Advent.

Wednesday 2 Saint Madeline Sophie Barat to a sister who criticized a woman who came begging frequently, “Imagine the shape we’d be in, Sister, if God limited the number of times we could beg for mercy.”

Thursday 3 Choose a book about homelessness for your Advent reading like *Breakfast at Sally’s* by Richard Lemieux or *Rachel and Her Children* by Jonathan Kozol.

Friday 4 Does your parish catechetical program include information on justice for the homeless? If not, join with others and offer to lead a class on the topic.

Saturday 5 “The Son of God entered this world as a homeless person. The Son of God knew what it was like to start life without a roof over his head.” Pope Francis

Sunday 6 Second Sunday of Advent

It’s an Irish custom to place a candle in the window at Christmas as a sign of welcome to the Holy Family in search of shelter. Spend some time in prayer before a candle in your window for the remaining evenings of Advent. Ask God to give you a more welcoming, hospitable heart.

Monday 7 Make a list of things you value about your home. Reflect on what it would mean for you to lose them.

Tuesday 8 “We have parish houses for the priests, parish houses for educational purposes, parish houses for recreational purposes, but no parish houses of hospitality.” Peter Maurin, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement.

Wednesday 9 An estimated 18 million people annually are climate refugees; made homeless by the effects of the climate crisis. Save someone’s home by resolving to eat less meat; drive less; eliminate plastics and other petroleum products from your life.

Thursday 10 “It is no use saying that we are born two thousand years too late to give room to Christ. Nor will those who live at the end of the world have been born too late. Christ is always with us, always asking for room in our hearts. And giving shelter or food to anyone who asks for it, or needs it, is giving it to Christ.” Dorothy Day

Friday 11 “As I was doing my volunteer work, I became emotionally and spiritually moved by the acts of the dignity and nobility and kindness that I was seeing within the homeless population that would move and inspire me every morning. This intensity of spirituality that I saw in the homeless community is something that is really not talked about” Michael Williams
Did you ever reflect that those experiencing homelessness might be spiritual teachers to you?

Saturday 12 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe “I am the Mother of all who dwell in this land. I will take them all to my heart and I will cure their many suffering afflictions and sorrows.” Pray for those south of our border who are driven from their homes by poverty and violence.

Sunday 13 Third Sunday of Advent

Learn about the “Fight for \$15,” the campaign to raise the minimum wage—a crucial step in raising people out of poverty <https://raisetheminimumwage.com/>

Monday 14 Feast of St. John of the Cross who wrote “If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the road pregnant with the Holy and say, ‘I need shelter for the night. Please take me inside your heart, my time is so close.’” Pray for a softening of your heart to the needs of those seeking shelter.

Tuesday 15 Nights are often long in shelters. Go through your library and select some books you can donate to a shelter.

Wednesday 16 Tonight in many Spanish-speaking communities begins the custom of Las Posadas—recalling the frantic search of homeless Joseph and Mary for shelter. The innkeepers say “You cannot stop here; I won’t make my house an inn. I do not trust you; your story is thin. You two might rob me and then run away. Find somewhere else you can stay. Go away, go away!” Pray in repentance of your prejudices about people experiencing homelessness.

Thursday 17 Las Posadas take place outside so the participants can experience the cold as Joseph and Mary did. Spend sometime outside today—and imagine what it is like to sleep there.

Friday 18 Spend some time in contemplation of the image at the bottom of the page by Everett Patterson. The piece, entitled *José y Maria*, depicts Mary and Joseph as a young Hispanic couple stranded in the car park of a seedy motel, the merciless light of a No Vacancy sign impassively looking on behind them.

Saturday 19 Learn something about the patron saint of the homeless, Benedict Joseph Labre (+1783) who lived among the poor of the streets.

Sunday 20 Fourth Sunday of Advent

“Giving something to someone in need is always right. It should be done with respect and compassion because tossing money and not looking in their eyes is not a Christian way of behaving,” Pope Francis

Monday 21 What do you know about your home – Earth? Research the species of animal and plant life in your neighborhood.

Tuesday 22 Watch a movie about homelessness: *Pursuit of Happyness*, *The Lady in the Van*, *The Public*, *The Soloist*.

Wednesday 23 Share with a friend what it was like for you to spend Advent reflecting on people experiencing homeless. How have you changed? What kind of change do you want to work for?

Thursday 24 Spend some time in prayer with your hand on your heart, aware of God’s longing to come home to your heart.

Friday 25 Christmas Day “And the Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us, and we gazed at his glory.”

John 1:14.



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