

Advent Reflections

December 2, 2019



Yesterday, we began a journey. It should be a joyful sojourn towards our newborn King. However, at this time of year, how many of us are worn out? We're battered by Thanksgiving travel, anticipating late-December weather delays, and navigating packed schedules filled with festive parties. In between all of this planning and scheduling, we aim to find trinkets to give our family members and friends, decorate our abodes, and prepare feasts (large or small, turkeys or cookie plates!) As students, professors, and professionals, we see our new semester on the horizon. Do we have the time and energy to seek out our Lord?

Sometimes a journey can refresh you. My husband says the best vacation we ever took was when we drove through Ireland. We had a few sight-seeing spots to hit and inn reservations along the way, but we spent most of the trip in the car, talking, laughing, and wondering at the verdant, Middle-Earth like vistas of the Emerald Isle. Much of the fun and joy of the trip was found in the people we encountered during the trip and the joyful music we stumbled upon in village pubs.

As we travel this Advent journey together, let's make a point to enjoy it! "Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord!" Let's stop and savor our relationships, our experiences, our everyday blessings. Let us actively seek the Lord who refreshes and renews us. For your trip, don't forget to pack joy, hope, trust, and faith. These virtues will help us persevere in intercessory prayer for our brothers and sisters. They'll spur us to seek the peace we will find at the end of our journey when we rest in Him.

Nancy Belmont,

*Master of Arts in Religious Education
(MARE), Class of 2022*

Reading 1 [IS 4:2-6](#)

On that day,
The branch of the LORD will be luster and glory,
and the fruit of the earth will be honor and splendor
for the survivors of Israel.
He who remains in Zion
and he who is left in Jerusalem
Will be called holy:
every one marked down for life in Jerusalem.
When the LORD washes away
the filth of the daughters of Zion,
And purges Jerusalem's blood from her midst
with a blast of searing judgment,
Then will the LORD create,
over the whole site of Mount Zion
and over her place of assembly,
A smoking cloud by day
and a light of flaming fire by night.
For over all, the LORD's glory will be shelter and protection:
shade from the parching heat of day,
refuge and cover from storm and rain.

Responsorial Psalm [PS 122:1-2, 3-4B, 4CD-5, 6-7, 8-9](#)

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

I rejoiced because they said to me,
"We will go up to the house of the LORD."

And now we have set foot
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Jerusalem, built as a city
with compact unity.

To it the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

According to the decree for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

In it are set up judgment seats,
seats for the house of David.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
May those who love you prosper!

May peace be within your walls,
prosperity in your buildings.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Because of my relatives and friends
I will say, "Peace be within you!"
Because of the house of the LORD, our God,
I will pray for your good.

R. Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

Alleluia [SEE PS 80:4](#)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Come and save us, LORD our God;
let your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel [MT 8:5-11](#)

When Jesus entered Capernaum,
a centurion approached him and appealed to him, saying,
"Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering dreadfully."
He said to him, "I will come and cure him."
The centurion said in reply,
"Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof;
only say the word and my servant will be healed.
For I too am a man subject to authority,
with soldiers subject to me.
And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes;
and to another, 'Come here,' and he comes;
and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it."
When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him,
"Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.
I say to you, many will come from the east and the west,
and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
at the banquet in the Kingdom of heaven."