



## 2023 JRS ADVENT CALENDAR

HOPE | PEACE | JOY | LOVE

### *Lighting the Journey of Refugees*

“Advent is a journey towards Bethlehem. May we let ourselves be drawn by the light of God made man.”

POPE FRANCIS

The season of Advent marks a time of preparation for the coming of the Christ Child. Like the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, it's a time for us to reflect on all people who are on the move.

This Advent, JRS invites you and your communities to dedicate your Advent Wreath and the lighting of the candles every week to our migrant and refugee siblings. Every Sunday we prepare for the birth of Jesus by lighting a new candle that respectively symbolises Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Join us in this weekly invitation to walk in solidarity with refugees and displaced persons through moments of prayer, reflection, and advocacy. It's an opportunity to see Christ revealed through God's people and it's a journey worth taking.

## 1.HOPE: Prophecy Candle - Advent Activities for the week of December 3rd

### Prayer for lighting the candle

May I see your face in every corner  
Lord, may I see...  
...may I see your face in every corner.  
May I see the disinherited laugh  
with joyful and reborn laughter.  
May I see the illusion light up  
in the dull eyes  
of those who once forgot to dream and believe.  
May he see the arms that,  
hidden but indefatigable,  
build miracles  
of love, of peace, of future.  
May he see opportunity and call  
where sometimes there is only mist.  
May he see how dignity regained  
closes the hells of the world.  
May I see my brother in another,  
in the mirror, an apostle  
and in my inner self I catch a glimpse of you.  
For I do not want to walk blind,  
lost from your presence,  
distracted by nothingness...  
misplacing my steps  
towards places without you.  
Lord, may I see...  
...may I see your face at every corner.



*A prayer by Fr. José María Rodríguez Olaizola, S.J.*

### Reflection

Advent invites us to be alert and to recognise at every corner of the road so many siblings in need of a hope-filled future.

Am I open to the 'stranger'?

How can I transform my gaze to see the face of Jesus in my migrant and refugee siblings?

In Syrian culture, if someone visits you without prior notice, it is expected that you will stop what you are doing and make every effort to be as hospitable as possible.

How can I show hospitality in my daily life?

## Action of HOPE

We create hope when we are able to change the discourse of hate and rejection for one of encounter and welcome.

We encourage you to learn firsthand how migrants and refugees live in your city. If you can't, read these three stories of determination and courage and share them with friends and family or in your social networks. Become a voice for refugees.

1. [A refugee activist turns challenges into opportunities for asylum seekers in the United Kingdom](#)
2. [The peace-building power of art for refugees in Jordan](#)
3. [The odyssey of refugees on their journey to Europe in search of a better future](#)

## 2. PEACE: Bethlehem Candle - Advent activities for the week of December 10th

### Prayer for lighting the candle

A prayer of the Holy Family  
The road we take  
leads toward the promise  
of security and stability  
for we flee not solely  
in fear, nor do we make this pilgrimage  
for the pursuit of untold riches.  
We do not seek to spread terror,  
for how dearly do we cling on to hope  
in knowing that goodness abounds  
wherever we shall land  
as a unit, but much more  
than a statistic or a painfully  
vetted file, rather, a family,  
peculiar and unusual like any other:  
united, courageous, holy.



*A prayer by Josh Utter, JRS/USA Advocacy Officer, Inspired by Matthew 2: 13-23*

## Reflection

Increasing global challenges and instability are weakening efforts toward achieving peace. When hope is hard to find, divisions provoke social conflicts, frustrations, and violence.

Women, men, and children forced to flee their homes are among those paying the highest price. Some experience incredible hardship on their journey to safety and are often met with hostility in their host countries. Others are left at the margins, with their needs neglected and their voices unheard.

We invite you to be present in parts of the world in need of peace. And to look at this reality and let us be affected by it.

1. [Five times displaced: a mother's struggle to provide education for her children in Myanmar](#)
2. [A ray of hope for displaced children living in a camp in Kabul](#)
3. [Stories of people fleeing Sudan in search of safety](#)

## Action of PEACE

“Be artisans of peace, around you and within you; ambassadors of peace, so that the world can discover the beauty of love, of living together, of fraternity and solidarity,” Pope Francis

Like Artisans use their skills, passion, and creativity to patiently craft unique items, we too can devote our time and care to create peaceful communities.

This week we invite you to pray for political leaders and decision-makers, that they may listen to the stories of displaced persons and that their policies may prioritise refugees. Let's advocate the cause of forcibly displaced people, by contacting your policymakers and asking for their support. Your voice is critical in helping refugees.

### 3. JOY: Shepherd's Candle - Advent activities for the week of December 17th

#### Prayer for lighting the candle

Now, Lord! When are you waiting? Now!  
Come quickly, come, for the world is spinning blindly  
ignoring the love that sustains it.  
Come quickly, come, Lord, for today between siblings traps are laid and snares are hidden.  
Come, come, that freedom is behind bars  
of the fear that one professes to the other.  
Come, come, come, do not cease now to listen to us  
when so many roads are closed  
Now, Lord! When will you wait? Now!  
Will you not be the joy of the poor,  
Of those who put their trust in you?  
Will you not be for the sorrowful and afflicted  
comfort in their sorrow, light in their cry?  
Who will put peace in our hearts  
if your tenderness and compassion are hidden?  
Who will fill this hunger for the infinite  
if you do not come to satisfy it yourself?  
Now, Lord! When will you wait? Now.

#### *Adaptation of Psalm 70*



#### Reflection

In JRS we work every day to bring the good news of love, peace and hope to all people who have been forced to leave their homes. We want to share that joy by accompanying, serving, and advocating for our siblings so that they may heal, learn, and determine their own future.

We encourage you to learn more about three JRS projects that exemplify good news.

- [1. Refugees and local communities live peacefully together in Cameroon](#)
- [2. Witnessing asylum seekers' hope and resilience at the US/Mexico border](#)
- [3. Displaced students and host community students become connectors of peace in India](#)

Let's reflect on all the good news that is revealed in our lives and how we have been able to learn and determine our own future during this last year.

And, out of gratitude, how we too feel called to share that joy.

## **Action of JOY**

On this 'Gaudete Sunday' we rejoice as witnesses to the joyful anticipation of the shepherds who journeyed to see Jesus in Bethlehem, even before the wise men.

We, like the shepherds and the Three Wise Men, are preparing the table, the food, and the presents to offer as a celebration of the birth of the child Jesus.

As we prepare ourselves for the festivities consider sharing that joy and present it to baby Jesus by organising a food drive, donating some of your clothes or donating to one of our projects.

## **4. LOVE: Angel's Candle - Advent activities for the week of December 24th**

### **Reflection**

The God of history summons us to gather around a simple manger that brought hope in new life. In that poverty revealed in the manger, in the simplicity of the lives of simple and ordinary people, God's presence can bring us a great surprise.

Just as more than 2000 years ago, the Lord is incarnated today in our cities and in our mangers. The encounter with the vulnerable on the margins of our neighborhoods allows us to meet God.

What are those places in my city where I can visit my migrant and refugee siblings and share LIFE with them?

Lord, light my light today so that it may illuminate the lives of so many people forced to flee their homes who are now my neighbours.

## **Action of LOVE**

Let us not be afraid that the Lord is with us; we are full of grace.

We invite you to explore the option of gathering with others and explore ways to welcome Jesus in the manger by welcoming refugees.

At JRS we work with Action Teams who are a light across cities and towns all around the world. Many of them are part of our Migrant Accompaniment Network. You too can be a light, join us.