



Advent with refugees

A Journey of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love



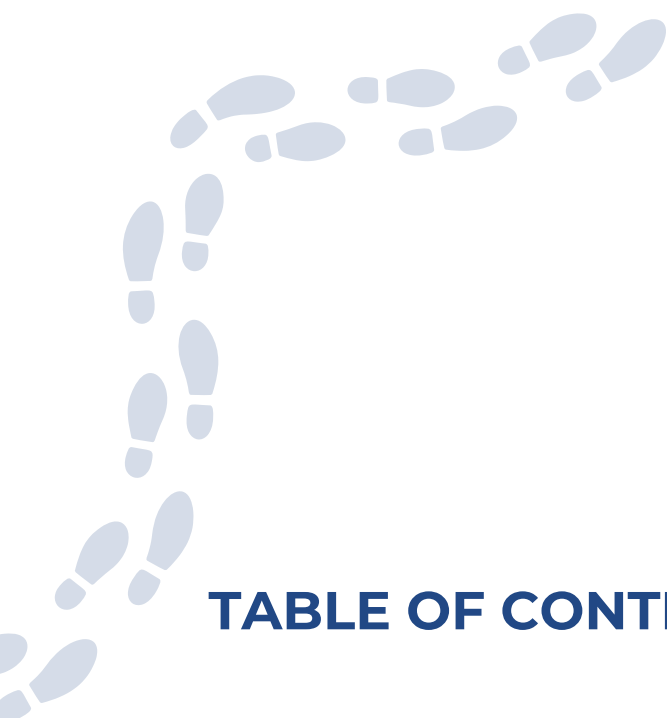


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INTRODUCTION

Advent is a season of waiting, hope, and preparation for the coming of Christ. For Christians, it is a time to open our hearts to God's presence, to prepare our lives for the birth of Jesus, and to recognise Him in those around us—especially in the people on the margins.

This year, as the Church celebrates the Jubilee theme **“Pilgrims of Hope,”** we are reminded that we are all on a journey: a journey of faith, of renewal, of walking together. Alongside us on this road are countless refugees and displaced families who also travel in hope, longing for safety, peace, and a place to belong.

At a time when many of our refugee brothers and sisters experience indifference, isolation, and rejection, this Advent resource invites us to open our hearts and communities to them. Each week, as we light the **candles of the Advent wreath**, we will pray, reflect, and take small actions of solidarity. Together, we prepare for the coming of Christ, who Himself came as a child without a home, welcomed by strangers, and bringing hope to a world longing for peace.

May this Advent season help us prepare not only for Christmas, but also to open our hearts to welcome each person and to recognise the unique value they bring.



PASTORAL REFLECTION

Beginning the Journey Together

Dear friends,

As we begin this Advent journey, we pause to open our hearts. Advent is a sacred time of waiting, longing, and preparing for Christ's coming, not only in history, but in our lives today. It is a journey we make together: with our families, our communities, and with all those who walk the hard road of displacement and exile.

To accompany refugees in prayer this Advent is to welcome Christ among us. Their stories reveal both the pain of waiting and the courage of hope. In listening to them, we discover anew the face of God who is present in every person seeking safety, peace, and belonging. Their journeys call us to move beyond indifference and to make space in our hearts, our homes, and our communities — for encounter and transformation.

Each week, as we light the candles of **hope, peace, joy, and love**, we are invited to let these lights grow within us — to become beacons of compassion in a world that too often turns away from refugees, migrants, and those forced to the margins. The small flame we kindle at home reminds us that even the smallest gestures, such as a listening ear, a word of encouragement, an act of welcome, can radiate warmth and healing far beyond what we see.

- May **hope** lead us to trust that God is at work, even in uncertainty.
- May **peace** guide us to build bridges where division and fear prevail.
- May **joy** remind us that grace can bloom even in barren places.
- And may **love** draw us to welcome one another as members of one human family.

This is our Advent pilgrimage: to walk together as pilgrims of hope, nurturing a world where every person is welcomed, valued, and able to live in peace.

Eric Goeh-Akue SJ
JRS Mission and Identity Coordinator

30 November 2025

WEEK 1 *Hope*



*“Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.”
(Isaiah 2:5)*

Advent begins with hope — the hope of a people longing for God’s promise to be fulfilled. Refugees embody this hope: after experiencing great loss, they set out on uncertain journeys, trusting there will be light ahead. As pilgrims of hope, we walk with them, believing that even in the darkest nights, Christ is coming to bring safety, healing, and belonging.



Photo: Yulianus Ladung/Jesuit Refugee Service

 **JRS**

WEEK 1

Hope



A TASTE OF HOPE

FAITH'S JOURNEY TOWARD NEW LIFE

As a little girl in Nigeria, Faith loved baking sweets and treats to help her family forget their troubles for a while. But one dreadful day, interreligious violence tore everything away. With no family or home left and nowhere safe to stay, she fled her country alone, crossing the desert and the sea.

Arriving in Italy, Faith found safety, but she felt she had lost herself: "I felt like a child again, having to learn everything from scratch, with the world around me feeling too big."

Little by little, she began rebuilding her life and she started remembering her passion for baking. With help from Centro Astalli (JRS Italy), she enrolled in a pastry course. The first time she baked again, the familiar aroma of fresh dough brought back memories of home and family. It was like opening a door to a part of herself she thought was lost forever.

Today, Faith works in a bakery in Rome. Baking is more than a livelihood; it is her journey back to the warmth of home.

WEEK 1 *Hope*



PRAYER TO LIGHT THE CANDLE

God of Hope, You call us to walk in Your light
even when the path is uncertain.
Be close to refugees who journey through darkness and fear.
Strengthen our faith, that we may walk with them
as true pilgrims of hope, trusting in Your promises.



TAKE ACTION

Learn one story of a refugee and pray for them **by name**.

WHAT I CARRY IN MY HEART

Write down what stays with you as a reminder, a guide,
or a grace for the path ahead.

7 December 2025

WEEK 2 *Peace*



“The wolf shall live with the lamb...and a little child shall lead them.” (Isaiah 11:6)

Peace is more than the absence of conflict, it is the presence of justice, truth, love, and right relationships that allow people and societies to flourish in dignity and solidarity. Refugees long for this peace, where differences enrich rather than divide and no one lives in fear. As pilgrims of hope, we prepare the way for Christ's peace by opening our hearts, our homes, and our communities to one another.



WEEK 2 *Peace*



PEACE IN DIVERSITY THE FESTIVAL OF ENCOUNTER

Each year, JRS Jordan organises the Festival of Encounter, a celebration that brings together refugees, migrants and host communities through music, art and dialogue.

During the festival, refugee artisans present handmade crafts, families share traditional food and dress, and performers brighten the day with music and dance. But more than the colours and sounds, the heart of the event is the spirit of mutual recognition and respect.

One participant shared: "All the festival attendees showed respect in their interactions, and the

experience greatly expanded my knowledge and personal awareness of cultural diversity. By learning to appreciate the unique customs, traditions, and values of each nationality, I also discovered how to engage more positively with others."

In a divided world, initiatives like this festival remind us that another way is possible. Respect, listening, and collaboration can weave people from different backgrounds into one fabric of belonging and solidarity.

WEEK 2

Peace



PRAYER TO LIGHT THE CANDLE

God of Peace, You dream of a world where enemies become friends and fear gives way to trust. Help us to build communities of solidarity and belonging for all, especially for those who have fled their homes. Make us instruments of Your peace.



TAKE ACTION

Participate in social or faith-based gatherings that include refugees or marginalised persons

WHAT I CARRY IN MY HEART

Write down what stays with you as a reminder, a guide, or a grace for the path ahead.

14 December 2025

WEEK 3 Joy



*"The desert shall rejoice and bloom."
(Isaiah 35:1)*

Gaudete Sunday calls us to rejoice, even before the journey is over. Refugees find joy in unexpected moments — a kind word, a shared meal, a safe place to rest. As pilgrims of hope, we celebrate the signs of new life God brings forth, even in barren places.

Photo: Yulianus Ladung/Jesuit Refugee Service



WEEK 3

Joy



JOY IN THE CLASSROOM

MOUSSA'S JOURNEY

In a small kindergarten classroom in Baalbek, Lebanon, a little boy named Moussa often began the day in tears. Living with a serious illness, the effects of chemotherapy left him fragile and withdrawn. The classroom, full of energy and noise, felt overwhelming, and Moussa preferred to sit alone in silence.

But slowly, things began to change. With patience, care, and encouragement from his teachers and classmates, Moussa found a space of safety. Step by step, he began to smile, to speak, and finally to laugh.

The child who once cried at the classroom door now arrives each morning with a sparkle in his eyes.

His hands, once hesitant, now move with confidence as he learns and plays. The classroom became more than a place of study, it became a refuge where he was free to be a child again.

Today, Moussa's laughter is a quiet triumph, a sign that joy can blossom even in hardship. His story reminds us that joy is not found only in ease, but in the gift of being seen, welcomed, and loved.

WEEK 3

Joy



PRAYER TO LIGHT THE CANDLE

God of Joy, You bring life where there is barrenness
and hope where there is despair.
Fill the hearts of refugees with Your joy
as they rebuild their lives and teach us to rejoice with them
as signs of Your kingdom appear among us.



TAKE ACTION

Share smiles, meals, or have a conversation
with a refugee or migrant in your community.

WHAT I CARRY IN MY HEART

Write down what stays with you as a reminder, a guide,
or a grace for the path ahead.

21 December 2025

WEEK 4 *Love*



*"The virgin shall conceive and bear a son
and shall name him Emmanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)*

God's love became flesh in Jesus, born as a child without a home. Refugees remind us that Christ still comes to us in the stranger, the outcast, the one seeking welcome. As pilgrims of hope, we open our hearts in love, creating communities where Christ's presence can be felt in every gesture of care and solidarity.



WEEK 4

Love



A GARDEN OF LOVE INDAY'S STORY OF SOLIDARITY

At 75, Inday carries memories of her home reduced to rubble during the 2017 siege in Marawi, Philippines. When the fighting began, she and her family fled, losing everything. Life in displacement was harsh. Meals were uncertain. Hope felt far away.

JRS Philippines came to their community, bringing livelihood support and skills training. For Inday, who used to love gardening, the turning point was learning how to grow vegetables in recycled bottles. Soon after she learned how to grow plants in little spaces and make organic fertilizers, tomatoes and pechay filled her tiny garden. "If we don't have anything to cook, we can always rely on the vegetables we grow."

Her garden did not just feed her family. When neighbours lacked food, she shared her harvest. What began as a way to survive became an act of love and solidarity.

Inday also learned about climate change and caring for creation. She stopped throwing plastics away carelessly and began practicing proper waste management. "Not just for my family," she says, "but for everyone around us."

Inday's small garden became a sign of God's love: rooted in the earth, growing in hope, and shared with others.

WEEK 4

Love



PRAYER TO LIGHT THE CANDLE

God of Love, in Jesus, Your love took flesh and made a home among us. Open our hearts to love as You love, to welcome as You welcome, and to create communities where no one is a stranger.



TAKE ACTION

Commit to ongoing support or advocacy for refugees beyond Advent.

WHAT I CARRY IN MY HEART

Write down what stays with you as a reminder, a guide, or a grace for the path ahead.

*God of all nations,
we thank You for the gift of this Advent journey.
May the light of Christ guide us to welcome the stranger,
accompany the vulnerable, and build communities of hope,
peace, joy, and love. May our hearts remain open
beyond this season, so that together we may reflect
the Kingdom of God on earth.
Amen.*

