

## Advent 2024 Reflections/Action Steps (Week Three)

### *Pilgrims of Hope*

This Advent, we journey as “Pilgrims of Hope,” guided by the Beatitudes and inspired by Pope Francis’ vision of hope. As we navigate a world often shadowed by uncertainty, our calendar invites us to look beyond darkness and discover signs of grace and renewal. Each day will be an opportunity to reflect on Christ’s teachings, recognize hope in unexpected places, and learn how we can become bearers of God’s compassionate light. Through the Beatitudes, we’ll explore how simple acts of mercy, peacemaking, and love can transform our hearts and our world, preparing us to welcome the ultimate hope of Christ’s coming.

**“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” (cf. Mt 5:7)**

#### **Sunday, December 15, 2024**

Pope Francis: *Jesus does not say, “Blessed are those who plot revenge.” He calls “blessed” those who forgive and do so “seventy times seven” (Mt 18:22). We need to think of ourselves as an army of the forgiven. All of us have been looked upon with divine compassion. If we approach the Lord with sincerity and listen carefully, there may well be times when we hear this reproach: “should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?” (Mt 18:33). (Guadete et Exsultate 82)*

**Action Step: Do an anonymous good deed for someone struggling.**

#### **Monday, December 16, 2024**

Fr. Richard Rohr: *We do not attain anything by our own holiness but by ten thousand surrenders to mercy. A lifetime of received forgiveness allows us to become mercy: That’s the Beatitude. We become what we receive, what we allow into our hearts. Mercy becomes our energy and purpose. Perhaps we are finally enlightened and free when we can both receive it and give it away—without payment or punishment.* <https://cac.org/daily-meditations/blessed-are-the-merciful-2018-02-04/>

**Action Step: Is there something you need to forgive yourself for? Spend some quiet time in prayer contemplating God’s mercy.**

**“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” (cf. Mt 5:8)**

#### **Tuesday, December 17, 2024**

#### **O Wisdom**

Pope Francis: *This Beatitude speaks of those whose hearts are simple, pure, and undefiled, for a heart capable of love admits nothing that might harm, weaken, or endanger that love. The Bible uses the heart to describe our real intentions, the things we truly seek and desire, apart from all appearances. (Guadete et Exsultate 83)*

**Action Step: Spend time in nature, appreciating the simple beauty of the world around you.**

#### **Wednesday, December 18, 2024 O Lord of Israel**

Saint Francis: *The truly clean of heart are those who look down upon earthly things, seek those of heaven, and, with a clean heart and spirit, never cease adoring and seeing the Lord God living and true. (The Admonitions XVI)*

**Action Step: Write a letter to yourself explaining the ways that you hope to stay focused on God in the coming year.**

**Thursday, December 19, 2024      O Root of Jesse**

Pope Francis: *A heart that loves God and neighbor (cf. Mt 22:36-40), genuinely and not merely in words, is a pure heart; it can see God. In his hymn to charity, Saint Paul says that “now we see in a mirror, dimly” (1 Cor 13:12), but to the extent that truth and love prevail, we will then be able to see “face to face.” Jesus promises that those who are pure of heart “will see God.”*

(Guadete et Exsultate 86)

**Action Step: Reach out to a friend or family member you haven't spoken to in a while, with the pure intention of reconnecting.**

**“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (cf. Mt 5:9)**

**Friday, December 20, 2024      O Key of David**

Saint Francis: *Those people are truly peacemakers who, regardless of what they suffer in this world, preserve peace of spirit and body out of love of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Admonitions XVI)*

**Action Step: Watch “Overcome Division in 8 Minutes” on YouTube. Practice the steps with your family and friends this holiday season.**

**Saturday, December 21, 2024      O Radiant Dawn**

Pope Francis: *It is not easy to “make” this evangelical peace, which excludes no one but embraces even those who are a bit odd, troublesome or difficult, demanding, different, beaten down by life, or simply uninterested. It is hard work; it calls for great openness of mind and heart, since it is not about creating “a consensus on paper or a transient peace for a contented minority,” [75] or a project “by a few for the few.” [76] Nor can it attempt to ignore or disregard conflict; instead, it must “face conflict head on, resolve it, and make it a link in the chain of a new process.” [77] We need to be artisans of peace, for building peace is a craft that demands serenity, creativity, sensitivity, and skill.*

(Guadete et Exsultate 82)

**Action Step: Reach out to a neighbor or coworker who is “a bit odd, troublesome, or difficult.” Try to connect in a new way.**