

Advent 2024 Reflections/Action Steps (Week Two)

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 meek, for they will inherit the land.” (cf. Mt 5:5)

Sunday, December 8, 2024

Pope Francis: *Christ says: “Learn from me; for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Mt 11:29). If we are constantly upset and impatient with others, we will end up drained and weary. But if we regard the faults and limitations of others with tenderness and meekness, without an air of superiority, we can actually help them and stop wasting our energy on useless complaining. (Gaudete et Exsultate 76)*

Action Step: Try to be patient with others today. Practice meekness.

Monday, December 9, 2024

Saint Francis: *Blessed is the servant who does not consider himself any better when he is praised and exalted by people than when he is considered worthless, simple, and looked down upon, for what a person is before God, that he is and no more. (The Admonitions XIX)*

Action Step: Hold the door open for someone or let someone go ahead of you in line.

Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Pope Francis: *It is always better to be meek, for then our deepest desires will be fulfilled. The meek “shall inherit the earth,” for they will see God’s promises accomplished in their lives. In every situation, the meek put their hope in the Lord, and those who hope for him shall possess the land... and enjoy the fullness of peace (cf. PS 37:9.11). (Gaudete et Exsultate 74)*

Action Step: What does it mean to hope in the Lord? Make a list of things you hope for in the coming year.

**“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.” (cf. Mt 5:6)**

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

Pope Francis: *Hunger and thirst are intense experiences, since they involve basic needs and our instinct for survival. There are those who desire justice and yearn for righteousness with similar intensity. Jesus says that they will be satisfied, for sooner or later justice will come. We can cooperate to make that possible, even if we may not always see the fruits of our efforts. (Gaudete et Exsultate 77)*

Action Step: Research a social justice issue that is important to you and identify one concrete action you can take to get involved.

Thursday, December 12, 2024

Fr. Richard Rohr: *This Beatitude is surely both spiritual and social. Most Bibles to this day soften this Beatitude: “hunger and thirst for what is right” or “for righteousness” are the more common faulty translations. But the word in Greek clearly means “justice.” Notice that the concept of justice is used halfway through the Beatitudes and again at the very end. The couplet emphasizes an important point: To live a just life in this world is to identify with the longings and hungers of the poor, the meek, and those who weep. This identification and solidarity is in itself a profound form of social justice.*
<https://cac.org/daily-meditations/blessed-hunger-justice-2018-02-02/>

Action Step: Contact your local elected representatives and advocate for a policy change that would promote justice and equality.

Friday, December 13, 2024

Pope Francis: *True justice comes about in people’s lives when they themselves are just in their decisions; it is expressed in their pursuit of justice for the poor and the weak. While it is true that the word “justice” can be a synonym for faithfulness to God’s will in every aspect of our life, if we give the word too general of a meaning, we forget that it is shown especially in justice towards those who are most vulnerable: “Seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow” (Is 1:17). (Gaudete et Exsultate 79)*

Action Step: Donate to a charitable organization that is working to advance human rights, economic justice, or environmental sustainability.

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

Saturday, December 14, 2024

Pope Francis: *Giving and forgiving means reproducing in our lives some small measure of God’s perfection which gives and forgives superabundantly. For this reason, in the Gospel of Luke we do not hear the words, “Be perfect” (Mt 5:48), but rather, “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you” (6: 36-38). Luke then adds something not to be overlooked: “The measure you give will be the measure you get back” (6:38). The yardstick we use for understanding and forgiving others will measure the forgiveness we receive. The yardstick we use for giving will measure what we receive. We should never forget this. (Gaudete et Exsultate 81)*

Action Step: Forgive someone who has wronged you.