

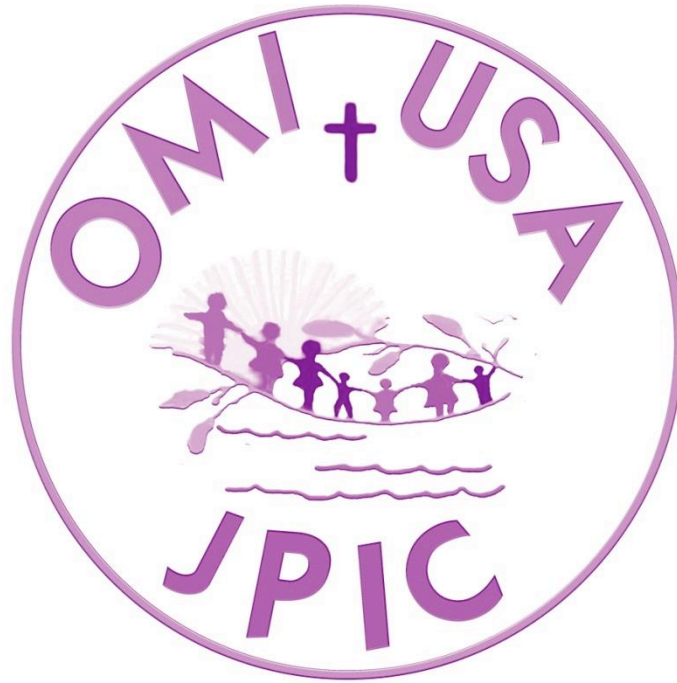


Advent Resources for 2015



Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
JUSTICE, PEACE, & INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Produced by Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate - Justice Peace & Integrity of Creation (JPIC) - Washington, DC



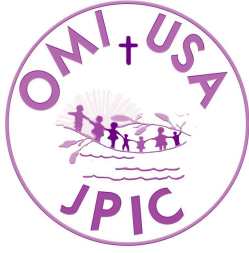
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
JUSTICE, PEACE, & INTEGRITY OF CREATION

**WEEK 1 OF ADVENT - NOVEMBER 29, 2015
OUR VOICES FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES**

**WEEK 2 OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 6, 2015
INTEGRITY OF CREATION**

**WEEK 3 OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 13, 2015
HUMAN DIGNITY**

**WEEK 4 OF ADVENT - DECEMBER 20, 2015
PEACE**



Week One of Advent: Nov. 29, 2015

Our Voices for Immigrants and Refugees

Reading:

“Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

Luke 21:34-36 New International Version (NIV)

Quote from St Eugene De Mazenod:

One day Eugene went into the lawyer's house and was surprised to see there was no fire: “Why”, he said to the family, don't you have any heating today, although it is really cold?” The ladies answered, teasing him, the child was not yet six: “Because we are poor and wood is expensive.” Eugene said goodbye and left: an hour later he is seen pushing along with some difficulty a little cart, loaded up with branches, that he drops briskly outside their door, saying: “Now then, here's something to warm you up.” You can imagine the whole family's feelings confronted with this sign of goodness. Several of its members used to tell it still thirty years later with tears in their eyes.

Eugene DeMazenod - Diary of the Exile in Italy (1791-1802)

Reflection:

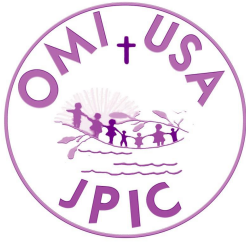
Today there are those who arrive in the U.S. to make a new beginning and who receive the same welcome as the Holy Family received – rejection and suspicion. In Advent, Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of a Jesus, whose family became migrants soon after his birth, traveling to Egypt to escape Herod's persecution. In addition to the good ministry and advocacy for immigrants you already do, here is another chance during Advent to: Walk Together in Faith with Immigrants; and reflect and pray for those who have died at the U.S./Mexico border.

Actions:

- I. Who are our neighbors and strangers in our communities?
- II. What are some of the things that we do in the society or church that exclude immigrants? How can we change these?
- III. Commit to educating others about the Church's teachings on migration and immigrants.



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Week Two of Advent: December 6, 2015

Integrity of Creation

Reading:

For the LORD is God, and he created the heavens and earth and put everything in place. He made the world to be lived in, not to be a place of empty chaos. "I am the LORD," he says, "and there is no other".

Isaiah 45:18 New Living Translation (NLT)

Quote from St. Eugene De Mazenod:

Is there anything, in fact, more joyful than the countryside, or much richer than nature, especially when the soul, that is as religious as it is sensitive, discovers, in every leaf and on the wing of each atom, the great name of the Eternal One.

Letter to Adolphe Tavernier, 12 October 1819, O.W. XV n.151

Reflection:

In the beginning when God made us rulers of the earth, we were created to protect it, not destroy it. There is scientific evidence that reckless human activity has contributed heavily to the global environmental crisis today. Food insecurity, fast melting glaciers, an increase in natural disasters and a rise in sea levels are all examples of the breakdown of our earthly home. Although the world's poor contribute the least to climate degradation, they are most affected. Advent is a time of prayer, reflection and gift giving. As individuals, let us make a fervent commitment to honor our creator and each other by caring for our precious gift, the earth.

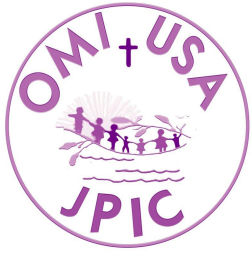
Actions:

- I. Learn more about environmental issues by reading and discussing Pope Francis's latest encyclical on ecology and climate change, *Laudato Si*.
- II. As one individual, significantly improving the environment can seem daunting. Brainstorm with your family and friends on manageable ways to be environmentally conscious in your home and community (e.g. recycling, using energy efficient light bulbs over conventional, etc.).
- III. Learn more about Catholic leadership on global climate issues at these websites: www.catholicclimatecovenant.org <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/> and <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/index.cfm>



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Week Three of Advent: December 13, 2015

Human Dignity

Readings:

The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor.

Isaiah: 61:1 as cited in Luke 4:18.

The crowds asked John the Baptist, “What must we do?” He answered, “Whoever has two tunics should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.”

Luke 3:10-11 New American Bible (NAE)

Quote from St. Eugene De Mazenod:

“Servants! Farmhands! Peasants! Poor! Come and learn who you are in the eyes of God. You poor of Jesus Christ, you afflicted, unfortunate suffering, infirm, diseased: all you who are burdened with misery, listen to me! You are the children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, co-heirs of His eternal kingdom, His cherished inheritance. Lift up your minds: you are the children of God. Look through the tatters that cover you.

Saint Eugene de Mazenod, OMI

Reflection:

As we move further along the Advent journey to the celebration of Jesus’ birth, we might imagine Joseph and Mary a week or so before Jesus was born. They were preparing to go to Bethlehem, not by their choice, but because they were required to do so by law – a decree had been issued that they be present there at a specified time to be counted in a census. This was hardly a convenient time for a young couple expecting a child at any moment, but the authorities had to be obeyed to avoid serious consequences. Like many today, Mary and Joseph were not free to make decisions for themselves.

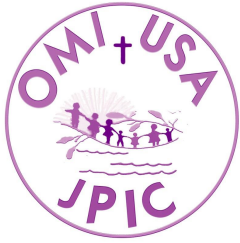
Actions:

- I. Who today are not free to make decisions for themselves?
- II. Who are unable to speak for themselves to change unfair situations?
- III. Millions are trafficked today here in the USA and around the world, forced into labor or sexual activity. Others are paid very poorly and have no voice to change this.
- IV. Pray to End Abortion. Support and Encourage local initiatives to provide transitional housing for young women and their babies.
- V. What are some ways that society encourages these things to continue? Pray about making a commitment to do one thing to change these situations.



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Week Four of Advent: Dec. 20, 2015

Peace

Reading:

“Thus says the LORD: You, Bethlehem-Ephrathah too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from of old, from ancient times. Therefore the Lord will give them up, until the time when she who is to give birth has borne, and the rest of his kindred shall return to the children of Israel. He shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord, in the majestic name of the Lord, his God; and they shall remain, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; he shall be peace.”

Micah 5:1-4A New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE)

Quote from St. Eugene De Mazenod:

“Together we await Christ’s coming in the fullness of his justice so that God may be all in all. Through the eyes of our crucified Savior, we see the world, which he redeemed with his blood, desiring that those in whom he continues to suffer will know also the power of his resurrection. Growing in faith, hope and love, we commit ourselves to be a leaven of the Beatitudes at the heart of the world. Our mission requires that, in a radical way, we follow Jesus who was chaste and poor, and who redeemed mankind by his obedience”.

Eugene DeMazenod – Rule of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Reflection:

“His greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; he shall be peace”. In many ways this verse seems counter-intuitive. Often when we speak of the world’s “great” nations we are thinking of those with the most military power. We read today, however, that the greatest kingdom of all – God’s kingdom will be established not with worldly power but through peace and humility. With all the violence happening in the world, locally and globally, Advent is a wonderful opportunity to reflect and renew our efforts in building God’s kingdom of peace.

Actions:

- I. What are some ways we can build peace within our own communities?
- II. How can we educate others about issues of peace and social justice on a broader scale?
- III. Make a concrete effort today to bring God’s peace to someone who is suffering.

May your heart and home be filled with all of the joys and blessings of Christmas!

Oblate JPIC Staff



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