



Embracing the Stranger: A Spirit of Hospitality



Years ago, I came across a striking billboard that read in bold white text, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." This was a bible verse taken from the Gospel of Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter, verse thirty-five. The word "stranger" was crossed out and the word "refugee" was replaced in red. The signature "Jesus" appeared after the verse. The billboard read, "I was a refugee and you welcomed me, Jesus." Since then, the image of refugees has stuck with me, especially when depicted as the Holy Family as shown in the artwork to the right.

Advent is a season of hospitality. We journey with Mary and Joseph, who made shelter in a stable in Bethlehem since there was no room at the inn, to prepare for the birth of Christ. Later fleeing to Egypt to escape persecution, they were strangers in a foreign land. In light of Laudato Si, we are called to



"Refugees: The Holy Family" by Kelly Latimore - kellylatimoreicons.com
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care for our common home and realities such as global migration invite us to open our arms and be a neighbor to others.

How have we welcomed the stranger in our place of ministry and own lives? This Advent is also a time of transition for the province as we welcome a new Provincial Council. As we journey this

Advent, we invite you to read some reflections from our lay leaders in SSND ministry. Read how they approach hospitality with respect to their role and ministry. Amidst the busyness the season brings, we wish you and your loved ones a Blessed Advent and Christmas holidays. Let us hold one another in prayer as we await the new year!

Advent Blessings,

Patrick *Yvonne*

Patrick Laorden Associate Director Ministry Services
Yvonne DeBruin Director Ministry Services



Julia Campagna

Notre Dame of Maryland University
Director of Mission and Ministry

At Notre Dame of Maryland University, Advent coincides with final exams – a time of preparation, of late nights that become early mornings. It is an end as much as a beginning. And it seems most appropriate – Advent is an invitation to prepare yourself



NDMU Students Resuming In-Person Learning

“Love endures in adversity, is moderate in prosperity; brave under harsh sufferings, cheerful in good works; utterly reliable in temptation, utterly open-handed in hospitality.”

– St. Augustine of Hippo

for what is to come, grounded in relationship and beckoned forth by light. In this particular year, the commitment, the dedication and the resiliency of our students, staff and faculty in many ways reflects a community that practices true hospitality – the expectation that you will be your most authentic self, the invitation to share your gifts, and the privilege of supporting those around you.

During this season, as the weight of this semester can feel particularly awkward to carry, grace and acceptance have become gift. As we prepare in different ways, as we dust off traditions that feel fuzzy and at times both integral and foreign, this Advent feels like an invitation to creativity – to imagine what could be, a reminder to pay attention to what is being called forth out of darkness.

Mayra Pimentel

Corazón a Corazón
Executive Director

Hospitality and making one with all those we serve, and those who enable our mission, is a year-round practice at Corazón a Corazón. Being sensitive to the individual needs of our learners and attentive to their situations and goals is of utmost importance. All are treated like family, like

"Corazón family!" and are offered a safe space to learn and be themselves.

For many, Corazón is where they find a sense of familiarity and home away from their native country. It is where children can learn and interact with one another in a relaxed setting. It is where volunteers find a sense of fulfillment and explore old or new interests

“Where love, there is God and where God, there is heaven - in our hearts, in our homes.”

– Blessed Theresa Gerhardinger, no. 949

in teaching or simply helping others along their path. They are an integral part of our ministry as they help us carry out what we hope to accomplish with our learners-- transformation through connection!

With gratitude and warmth, staff at Corazón welcome all as we hope to show this is their home away from home.



Youth at Corazón's Summer Achievement Camp

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Mary Carter Warren

AMSSND

Associate Director of JPIC

The hospitality industry – restaurants, bars, hotels, transportation – really took a hit during the past twenty months with COVID. Strangers greeted from behind plexiglass, spoken to through masks, arrangements made digitally to avoid human contact. The welcome was different on both sides of the glass. Hospitality, “the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers,” shifted.

Hospitality requires being seen. Everyone needs to be seen, to be recognized, to have someone know they exist on this earth. Being seen doesn't happen only with our eyes, but with all our senses, giving us a full picture of what or who is right in front of us. We simply cannot welcome what we do not see.

Mary and Joseph, weary from their travels, found nowhere to stay and no one to welcome them. They were invisible, one more burdensome traveler. We might imagine the innkeeper as a grumpy inhospitable person, telling them there is no room in the inn, but I am that innkeeper when I cannot or will not see. Mary and Joseph were not recognized, they were not seen. The life they shared in the infant Jesus about to be born was not seen by others. He, and they, did not look like the sign others had been looking for.

Laudato Si' challenges us to really see each other and our deep connection to the created order as truly sacramental, pointing us in the direction of God. To see those on the border of Poland, to see those on the border of Mexico, to see the vulnerable members of our communities wherever we live. To see the effects of climate change not as what happens to others, but that



"Remembering When"
Photo by Tim Mossholder

when it happens to others it happens to us. To see the broken hearted. To see those who are most vulnerable right in front of us. To see both the beauty and the agony of life. We cannot welcome what we do not see.

During this Advent season, may we see and recognize the strangers in our midst, and welcome them into our lives. May we find room in the inn of our hearts for the stranger who will forever change us. May we see the earth as the common home of all of creation, and as God does, say “it is good.”

Pope Francis

Fratelli Tutti (no. 84-85)

Excerpt

Finally, I would note that in another passage of the Gospel Jesus says: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt 25:35)...For Christians, the words of Jesus have an even deeper meaning. They compel us to recognize Christ himself in each of our abandoned or excluded brothers and sisters (cf. Mt 25:40.45). Faith has untold power to inspire and sustain our respect for others, for believers come to know that God loves every man and woman with infinite love and



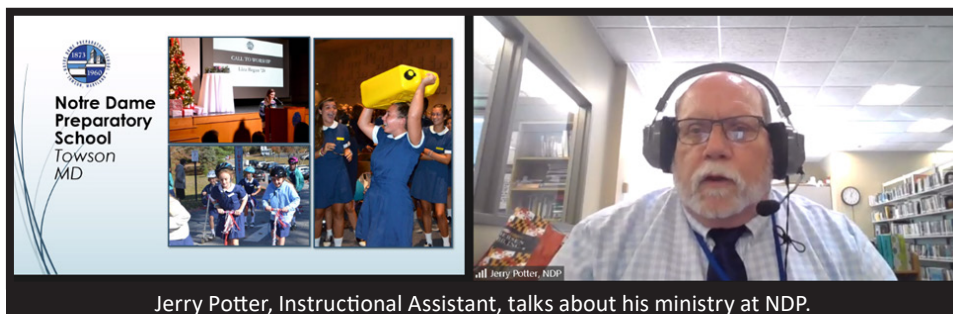
Syrian Refugee Camp in the Outskirts of Athens
Photo By Julie Ricard

“thereby confers infinite dignity” upon all humanity.

We likewise believe that Christ shed his blood for each of us and that no one is beyond the scope of his universal love. If we go to the ultimate source

of that love which is the very life of the Triune God, we encounter in the community of the three divine Persons the origin and perfect model of all life in society. Theology continues to be enriched by its reflection on this great truth.

Beginning the SSND Journey Together



Seventeen leaders from seven sponsored ministries and province departments gathered virtually from all parts of the Atlantic-Midwest Province for the New Employee Orientation (NEO), offered on Tuesday morning, November 9th and Wednesday afternoon, November 10th. Read further [here](#).

Reflection Questions

How can you practice hospitality during this Season of Advent?

Who is the stranger in your life that God is inviting you to welcome?

Upcoming Events

March 4-5, 2022

Ministry Formation Session IV (Onsite/Virtual TBD)

April 6 and 7, 2022

New Employee Orientations (Virtual)

June 28-30, 2022

Proclaiming the Fire Within Retreat (Onsite/Virtual TBD)

*Those who previously attended the Claiming the Fire Within Retreat are eligible.

Resources

Articles

[\(Earth's Cry for Hospitality\)](#)

[COP26 ends with agreement but falls short on climate action \(United Nations\)](#)

[\(Skills for Hospitality\)](#)

[Deep Listening \(Stanford Social Innovation Review\)](#)

Resources

[Purpose-Driven Board Leadership \(BoardSource\)](#)

[Visio Divina \(Divine Seeing\) Advent Reflections \(Catholic Health Association\)](#)

[SSND Daily Advent Intentions \(SSND Generalate Community\)](#)

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UNITED IN MISSION

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