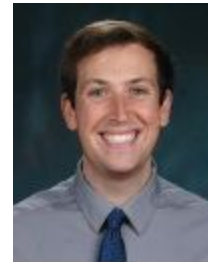




**Second Week of Advent**  
**Monday, December 7th, 2020**

*Mr. Steven Patzke, Executive Director of Mission Integration, shares his reflections on today's Scripture readings.*



IS 35:1-10; PS 85:9AB, 10, 11-12, 13-14; LK 5:17-26

In the first reading, the prophet Isaiah tells us, “The desert and the parched land will exult; the steppe will rejoice and bloom. They will bloom with abundant flowers, and rejoice with joyful song.” Today’s readings have me drawn to these opening verses because of a sense of dryness and desolation I’ve experienced in my spiritual life this Advent. In talking these feelings over with my wife and family, I’ve discovered so much of it can be attributed to the absence of Sunday Mass in my routine. Live-streams and pre-recorded liturgies have left me disconnected from the Eucharist that nourishes me, the community that sustains me, and the Church aesthetic that connects me to the season of Advent. Advent is always full of seeing the nativity outside of the church, entering into the dark sanctuary covered in purple, singing some of my favorite Advent songs, and journeying to Bethlehem in the weekly Scripture readings... but this year is different. Reflecting upon the absence of this rich liturgical season has invited me to cultivate Advent within me, rather than drawing from it externally.

With my eyes set on moving from being the “parched land” to becoming land that will “bloom with abundant flowers and rejoice with joyful song,” I’ve taken some steps to bring Advent into my home. The first way is through prayer. Each evening after dinner, we hold a prayer service. It is kind of like an Advent calendar because each evening’s prayer puts us one day closer to Christmas. We begin by lighting our Advent wreath. We made it using our own candles and pieces of evergreen from around our yard! We then read the daily Scripture readings and pray with them. It’s given us the chance to hear each other’s prayers and talk about what the readings are calling us to. Finally, we sing a verse of *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*. Our little nightly liturgy provided us the opportunity to create new family traditions and set us on a path to enter Christmas “rejoicing with joyful song!”

Here are some reflection questions for today: What are some ways that you can get creative in Advent this season? How might you be able to reflect upon your feelings and experiences to see what your spiritual needs are? In what ways is God inviting you to cultivate the spirit of Advent internally and externally in your life?

**Faith: Lived, Deepend, Celebrated**

During these uncertain times, we welcome your prayer requests. The Bishop Chatard community will lift up your prayer intentions in the weekly BCHS Prayer Chain. **Email Mr. Steven Patzke, at [spatzke@bishopchatard.org](mailto:spatzke@bishopchatard.org), your prayer intentions or to join the prayer chain.**