

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ♦ Reflect on
 - ♦ Some of the blessings you are grateful for this Advent season
 - ♦ One or two practical ways of being 'women of the beatitudes' within our own communities.
 - ♦ How we can become peaceMAKERS as we live our lives each day
 - ♦ One very specific way of standing in solidarity – as a Marist community – with the poor and persecuted of our world this Advent
 - ♦ Sing a song together



ADVENT 2018



**Let's prepare
the Way**

May we never “Advent” in exactly the same way.... May this Advent be different!



We are not the same as we were in Advent 2017.

We are faced with different challenges and responsibilities, moved by different insights, challenged by fresh opportunities and different memories, equipped with increasing or diminishing capacities for coping with all these variations. So we never “Advent” in exactly the same way.

This year we are inviting you to “Advent” with the wisdom of the Beatitudes and of Pope Francis

... May these eight beautiful Beatitude qualities help us to discern what it means to be Marist in today’s world and may they offer us a promise of joy!

**Being poor of heart,
humble and meek,
knowing how to mourn with others,
seeing and acting with mercy,
having a heart that is free and untarnished,
sowing peace all around,
accepting the daily path of the Gospel
... this is holiness.**

To find God we must look in those places we least expect to see him: among the poor, the outcast, the mourner, the hungry, the thirsty— among those who seem to have nothing. And to find God, we must discover our own need—our own smallness, hunger, thirst, and emptiness, which God alone can fill.

**Lord,
during this Advent season,
open our eyes to see your presence, love, mercy and
peace
in unlikely places.
Yes, even a stable!
And gently unleash within us
in the simplicity and silence of the stable
the desire to be in solidarity
with all whose lives
are hidden in pain, obscurity and darkness. Amen.**



Whatever our task,
our lives have no meaning
if they do not proclaim Jesus Christ,
present in the world,
transforming and saving it. Const. 33

Mary is with us,
teaching us to be sensitive
to the needs of all ... Const. 34

In the spirit of our Founders,
we shall have a special care
for the poor and underprivileged... Const. 36

Jesus says “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs
is the kingdom of heaven”

Pope Francis adds : “Blessed are those who have a
poor heart,
for there the Lord can enter with his perennial
newness
... and there they can share in the life of those
most in need,
the life lived by the Apostles.” GE 68 and 70

Jesus says, “Blessed are the meek, for they will in-
herit the earth”

Pope Francis adds, “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....
In the Church we have often erred by not embrac-
ing this demand of God’s word.” GE 72 and 73

Jesus says “Blessed are those who mourn, for they
will be comforted”

Pope Francis adds “The world has no desire to
mourn; it would rather disregard painful situa-
tions, cover them up or hide them... But the cross
can never be absent. A person who sees things as
they truly are and sympathises with pain and sor-
row is capable of touching life’s depths and finding
authentic happiness.” GE 75 and 76



Jesus says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

Pope Francis adds, “Hunger and thirst are intense experiences... (we are called) ... to desire justice and yearn for righteousness with similar intensity... 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.” GE 77 and 79

Jesus says, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy”

Pope Francis adds, “Mercy has two aspects. It involves giving, helping and serving others, but it also includes forgiveness and understanding. GE 80

Jesus says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

Pope Francis adds, “ this Beatitude reminds us that the Lord expects a commitment to our brothers and sisters that *comes from the heart*. A Heart that loves God and neighbour, genuinely and not merely in words, is a pure heart; it can see God” GE 85 and 86

Jesus says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

Pope Francis adds, “This Beatitude makes us think of the many endless situations of war in our world. Yet we ourselves are often a cause of conflict or at least of misunderstanding...

(This peace- evangelical peace) 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 and calls for great openness of mind and heart.” GE 87 and 89

Jesus says, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Pope Francis adds, “Jesus warns us that the path he proposes goes against the flow, even making us challenge society by the way we live and, as a result, becoming a nuisance.”