

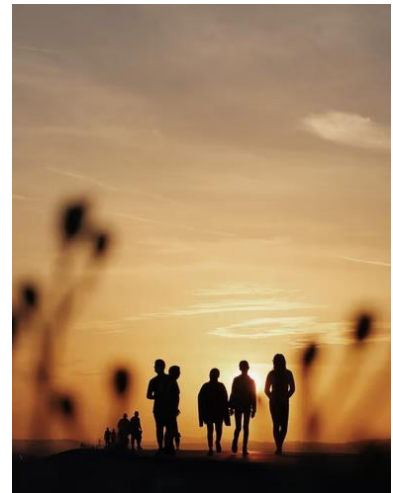


## Advent 2021 Prayer-Reflection Guide 2

### Washing One Another's Feet

#### Walking the Journey:

In 2014, at the first International Congress on Tourism and Pilgrimages, the UN released a study that showed that one in every three tourists worldwide was a pilgrim — a total of around 330 million people a year. That figure includes about a quarter of a million pilgrims walked the Camino to Santiago de Compostela, 30 million who travel to Tirupati in India, 20 million to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico, 15 million who go to Karbala in Iraq, four million to Lourdes and about 3 million to Mecca. Seven years later, Covid 19 has impacted this pilgrim journey to ensure safe space for both pilgrims and residents of pilgrimage centres. However, the spiritual or religious desire to go on pilgrimage remains. The waiting to set foot on the road has become even stronger.



Hester Qiang - Unsplash

In these days we travel with the holy family as they walked their way from Nazareth to the manger in Bethlehem where Jesus will be born. Advent has its own sort of inner pilgrimage. It can offer us some wisdom on how we make this journey as we walk this way together with others.

#### Prepare a place where you can be comfortable to be present to the Presence –

In the Name of Father, Son and Spirit - in this Presence you begin your journey.

On this journey you grow in the ability to be present to the present moment.

*“God does not ask of us the perfection of tomorrow or even of tonight but only of the present moment.” – St. Madeleine Sophie Barat*

#### A gift to ask God for

Ask for the grace to trust the way like Mary and Joseph as you set out this week on your inner pilgrimage.

*“As you start to walk the way, the way appears.” -Rumi*

*“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation...” (Isaiah 52:7).*

#### 1. Wash Your Feet - [Click here to watch the video](#)

Your feet are the first to touch the ground. To walk the journey, you take care of your feet. Wash away the dust that has gathered over time in memories, prejudices, anger, unforgiveness. After you wash your feet, they are ready to step into your ‘sacred prayer space’.

*“Within you there is an inner divine space. Seek that which is in it. Know the Divine within you.”*  
(Chand Up. 8.1.1)

In Advent, walk mindfully inside the space of yourself, your divine space walk around, look around, take in all that you see, only observe, do nothing, judge nothing, change nothing. You have begun to make a way for the Lord in your own heart and “all people shall see the salvation of God.”

Scripture: Luke 3:1-6

*“A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord,  
Make His paths straight. Every valley will be filled in,  
Every mountain and hill be laid low, Winding ways will be straightened and  
Rough roads made smooth. And all people shall see the salvation of God.”*

## 2. Washing the Feet of Another - [Click here to watch the video](#)

Now that you have a space in your heart think of someone whom you have been waiting to invite. Let them come in just as they are with their backpacks. Take the time you need to wash their feet *“which are weary from the journey”* (Chapter 1994). Keep inviting people into your space and wash their feet. This act of yours is unconditional.

In this Advent as you wash the feet of the people whom you have invited, you are washing away your own fears, hatred, jealousy, and anything that is an obstacle to love. In building communion with each other you are also lightening your load. Allowing the Spirit to transform you and keep making space within your heart.

What are you carrying that you can let go of this Advent? What is unnecessarily weighing you down? How can you lighten the load? Leave some room in your pack for the gifts of this time: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love.

Scripture: Philippians 1: 8-11

*“My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more and never stop improving your knowledge and deepening your perception so that you can always recognise what is best.”*

## 3. Washing Each Other's Feet - [Click here to watch the video](#)

The longest journey is the journey to your true self. The grace of the spiritual journey is the way is already the end. Our end is the manger in Bethlehem. You journey with fellow pilgrims, friends, some strangers at first but soon you become familiar because the end of the journey is the same. What brings them and you on this journey?

At times on the journey stop, sit down, find a river, a tap, some water and wash each other's feet. Listen to your story and listen to theirs. As you wash each other's feet you talk about “what marvels the Lord has worked for you and indeed you are glad.” Psalm 125. Who are your traveling companions this Advent with whom you sing today's psalm and get the strength to travel to the mystery of the Incarnation waiting to be born anew in our world?



*“Washing Feet” by Sophie Mailler rscj*

### Words for the journey

*Lord of the journey,  
The way before me may seem unclear  
Help me to trust that the way  
That will make itself known by walking on it,  
Not alone but with many others.*

End your week of prayer with a gesture of gratitude as you continue on your pilgrim journey.

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