



## Advent 2021 Prayer-Reflection Guide 1 Transforming and Being Transformed

The readings for the First Sunday of Advent:

Jeremiah 33:14-16 / 1Thessalonians 3:12-4:2 / Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

invite us to reflect on the brokenness of our human and global situation — and the different ways we participate in the transformation of our world, our countries, our families, and circles of relationships, as well as in our own lives. In other words, we are invited to be Artisans of Hope.

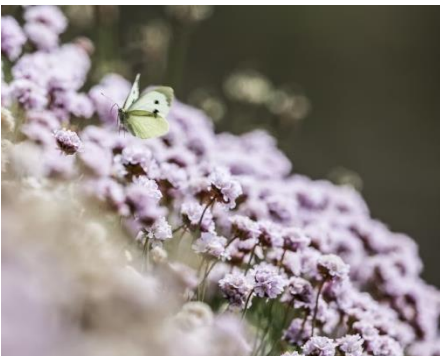
*“In those days Judah shall be safe, and Jerusalem shall dwell secure; this is what they shall call her: “The Lord our justice.”* Jeremiah 33: 16

We long for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation (JPIC) in our world. However, we believe that this is no easy change. It requires deep transformation, which can only be experienced in relationships. Transformation involves our participation, but it happens in us and to us – a relational process that surpasses human efforts. “We have come to know that transformation is not the same as change. The strategies of change come from our own initiative, while transformation is always the fruit of an Encounter.”

(Life Unfolding... Offering the Gift Received. Reflection from the Initial Formation Meeting Guadalajara, July 23 - August 3, 2012 (p. 11).)

It is “the Spirit dwelling within us [that] gradually transforms us, enabling us through His power to remove whatever hinders [the Spirit’s] action.”

(1982 Constitutions of the Society of the Sacred Heart, #21.)



S N Pattenden - Unsplash

IN PRAYER, I NAME AND AM GRATEFUL FOR THE ENCOUNTERS THAT HAVE TRANSFORMED MY LIFE.

The Gospel of Luke urges us to be open to encounter with God and not to lose hope or become fearful. We are counselled to stay awake, stand erect and be ready for God to act in our lives.

WHAT DOES “BEING READY” MEAN FOR ME IN MY GIVEN CONTEXT?  
HOW AM I BEING CHALLENGED TO “BE READY” IN MY PRESENT MOMENT?

This year, the First Week of Advent corresponds with the closing days of the Society of the Sacred Heart’s Special General Chapter. Together, we readied ourselves for its foci: new ways of organizing and sharing resources. In our JPIC document, Being Artisans of Hope in Our Blessed and Broken World, we recognize that JPIC is about God’s care for all life and all relationships on the planet. Therefore, God is concerned about structural transformation, whether congregational, social, political, economic, ecological, planetary, or cosmic.

“As artisans of hope in our blessed and broken world, we continue to be called to advocate for structural and systemic change in our respective local contexts. This time, however, we do so with urgency and a shared global vision that begins with an honest examination of how we may be complicit in the very structures that we work to transform.” (Artisans of Hope, p. 7)

WHAT STRUCTURES OR SYSTEMS OF INJUSTICE TOUCH ME OR MY COMMUNITY?

HOW MAY I/WE BE CONTRIBUTING, KNOWINGLY OR  
UNKNOWINGLY, TO UNJUST SYSTEMS?

In Artisans of Hope, we also “envision and work for a new social fabric that is founded on the values of justice, peace, and integrity of creation. We hope for a better world where there is greater equity and a deepened sense of democracy that welcomes diversity and the participation of all. We clamor for respect for human dignity and we make our small contributions in responding with care and hope to the yearnings of humanity and earth.” (p. 8)

HOW DO MY/OUR LOCAL EFFORTS CONTRIBUTE TO  
PROMOTING JPIC AT A GLOBAL LEVEL?

WHAT CONCRETE STEPS DO I/WE TAKE TO ACT LOCALLY WITH  
A SHARED GLOBAL VISION? AND WITH WHOM IS IT SHARED?

“Being and acting together as One Body will enliven our power to effect transformation of unjust structures and systems. While our spirituality has always been relational, it is precisely at this moment in our collective history that we are more sensitive to the potential of interrelationships. We recognize the urgency to strengthen collaboration amongst ourselves as RSCJ and the entire family of the Sacred Heart, as well as with collaborators. We are convinced that our unity and spirit of Cor Unum give us greater hope, energy and creativity to transform unjust structures.” (Artisans of Hope, p. 14)



Jaka Škrlep - Unsplash

WHERE DO WE SEE POSSIBILITIES FOR TRANSFORMATION IN OUR PERSONAL  
LIVES, IN COMMUNITY, IN OUR APOSTOLIC ENGAGEMENTS?

HOW DO I EXPERIENCE MYSELF/US AS AN “ARTISAN OF HOPE”?

It is in this spirit of HOPE that we light our first Advent candle, trusting anew that transforming and being transformed is God’s work in us and through us.

*“The Lord will bestow his bounty, and the earth shall yield its increase.”* Psalm 85

Sheila Smith rscj  
USC Province



JPIC LEARNING HUB  
2021