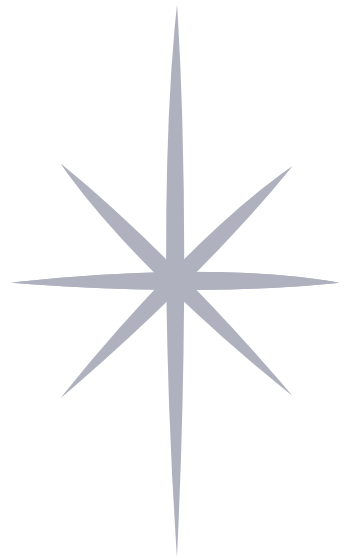


# Following the Star

ADVENT RETREAT 2021



## Week 2: Adjusting to the Dark

*"You will seek me and find me  
when you seek me with all your heart."*

*- Jeremiah 29:13*

### REFLECTION:

#### 1) Artificial darkness

*Let God be God. (Trust and Vulnerability)*

#### 2) Natural Darkness

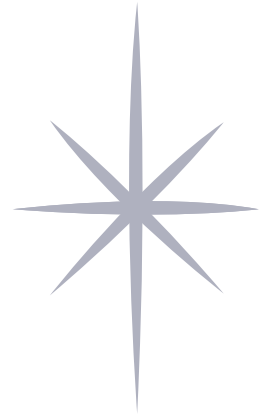
*Craving is simply an indicator of our need for God.*

#### 3) A Clear Dark Night

*Sanctifying grace is not the finish line, it is the starting line!!*

*This is the  
verdict,  
the light  
came into  
the world,  
but the  
people  
preferred  
darkness  
to light...  
- John 3:19*

# Week 2: Challenge



## TO DO:

- Continue your family plan and add hay to the Manger
- Find some quiet time where you can ask God to help you see your "darkness"
- Go to Confession

## SELF REFLECTION:

What does it mean to *desire* God? What are the things that are "filling" your life, thus weakening your desire for God?

Have you ever thought before about what "sin" means? Does a change of perspective help your attitude toward confession?

What is the biggest hurdle you will face in making it to confession this Advent? How can you overcome it?

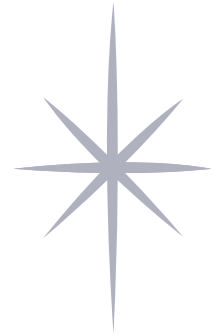
## RESOURCES:

- See accompanying email
- Introduction to Fasting - *Sugar Fast* by Wendy Speake
- Emily P. Freeman - [www.emilypfreeman.com](http://www.emilypfreeman.com)

*You have  
made us  
for  
Yourself,  
Oh Lord,  
and our  
hearts are  
restless,  
until they  
rest in  
You.  
~Augustine*

*Wash your hands and purify your hearts. Come near to God  
and He will come near to you. -James 4:8*

# Advent Examen



YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART,  
WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.  
- MATTHEW 22:36

## REFLECTION:

*Use this list to help you prepare your heart for the King this Christmas with a strong Advent confession.*

- 1) Do I actively prioritize my Relationship with God on a daily basis? Do I desire Him? Why? Or Why not?
- 2) Is there anything you can think of that you prioritize over seeking God in your life? What consumes your time/focus/energy?
- 3) Do you make time for daily quiet, prayer, reflection, and/or spiritual reading? If not, why? (Be specific)
- 4) Do you prioritize going to Mass? If you don't have an appreciation for Mass, do you make an effort to study and ask questions, that your understanding and appreciation may grow? Do you approach Mass with proper solemnity, participation, and dress?
- 5) Do you truly believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and that He desires a genuine and intimate relationship with you? Do you treat the reception of Holy Communion as an honor and a privilege rather than an obligation or a right?
- 6) Do you know of any specific sins that have become habitualized/normalized in your life? (ie. anger, resentment, dishonesty, gossip, laziness, etc). Sometimes these can be difficult to identify because they have become so "normal" for us. Take this question to your prayer and ask the Lord for courage, clarity, and honesty.
- 7) Are there any addictions you struggle with that are preventing you from seeing beyond your next "fix"? We are not just talking about medications or drugs here, but the more subtle ones that are equally devastating to our spiritual lives, often referred to as "guilty pleasures". Most commonly these are addictions to food, drink, sleep, entertainment, sins against the 6th and 9th commandments, attention, and "self-care".
- 8) When was the last time you went to confession? What is your attitude toward confession?