News
EarthBeat



(CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz)



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Editor's Note: *For the 2021 Advent season, EarthBeat is revisiting and republishing some of the reflections from last year's series, "Simple Advent, Abundant Life." Sign up here to receive the "Simple Advent Revisited" reflections three times a week in your inbox.*

Fourth week of Advent—Community

Friday, Dec. 24

REFLECT

> "Our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you."
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> St. Augustine of Hippo
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> "Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening life in me."
>
> Contemporary translation of the Principle and Foundation of St. Ignatius of Loyola by Jesuit Fr. David Fleming

We are pilgrim people in this life, and just like the Holy Family, we too are in search of shelter, protection, love and acceptance. Jesus is the star that guides us through the chaos and distraction present in our lives and reminds us that we do not need to accumulate excessive material wealth in order to live meaningful lives. He shares the paradoxical message that the richest life is often the one that is given away.

In the First Principle and Foundation of the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius reminds us that our true purpose on this journey is to allow God’s life to deepen within us. While we have been given many gifts by God, we must recognize when attachments to them lead us away from our purpose: to live the abundant life that God desires for us, even more deeply than we desire it for ourselves.

Overconsumption of resources and cramming our lives full of material goods and experiences can hinder us from living the richest lives possible, yet oftentimes we indulge in these things in order to try to fill the God-shaped hole in our restless hearts. Pope Francis shares this sentiment in "*Laudato Si*', on Care for Our Common Home", when he writes, "The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast."

Yet, we do not have to continue to live this way. Jesus provides hope and good news through his ministry and way of being. He looks at us lovingly, the same way that he gazed at the rich young man, and says, "You are already enough. Stop grasping for things that will not satisfy. Rest in me."

This Christmas Season, we welcome the Holy Family into our hearts and invite Jesus to help clear out whatever prevents us from living gently on the earth, sharing equitably with our neighbors and living abundantly in our communities.

ACT

Prayerfully explore your interior deserts this Christmas season, and ask God for the grace to lovingly tend to and heal the areas of our life that hinder us from living simply.

View the final day of the Advent Simplicity Calendar.

Simple Advent, Abundant Life

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This story appears in the **Simple Advent Revisited** feature series. View the full series.