

# *Living well through Advent*

*Week Three*

*Friday 16 December 2022*

*Simple Joy*

*It is a valuable practice at night to spend a little while revisiting sanctuaries of your lived day. Each day is a secret story woven around the radiant heart of wonder. We let our days fall away like empty shells and miss all the treasures.*

*John O'Donohue*

As we continue to explore simplicity and joy, the quote above captures the importance of the simple yet essential practice of noticing each day what brings us wonder and joy. So how do we pay attention to what brings us joy? And when we figure that out, how do we sustain and grow the experience of joy?

There are three spiritual practices in particular that may help to keep us grounded and receptive to what brings us joy: gratitude, meditation, and a daily examen. For many of us, practicing gratitude wherever possible helps us to notice what brings us joy. Quietening the mind through silence creates space to listen more closely for what brings joy. And a daily examen provides an opportunity to look thoroughly and honestly at the day, identifying the highs and lows, the joyful and the painful.

Inevitably what we find is that it is the small things that bring us the most enduring joy: the smell of a grandchild, the first birdsong of the morning, the sun's reflection sparkling on the waves, the taste of freshly picked strawberries, the warmth of a hug from a friend.

When we are able to celebrate what brings us joy, we celebrate what truly matters: a sense of belonging, of loving and being loved, of experiencing and expressing joy, which is a perfect gift to offer, to ourselves and to others during this holy season of Advent.

## **Let us reflect on the following:**

- ◆ What helps you to identify and celebrate the simple joys in your life?
- ◆ Perhaps you might pause right now and name some-thing small that has brought you joy recently.
- ◆ What might help you to continue to notice the small things that bring you joy for the remainder of Advent?

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