



# Advent Reflection

**Day #26**

**Thursday, December 24**

2 SM 7:1-5, 8B-12, 14A, 16; LK 1:67-79

These readings both emphasize that God is always with us, even in times of difficulty and sadness. As we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been great stress in the United States. The Center for Disease Control noted this pandemic has been associated with higher levels of mental health conditions in young adults, essential workers, racial and ethnic minorities such as increased substance use and increased thoughts about suicide <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm>

Another stress during this pandemic involves patients requiring hospitalization, their families and their friends due to strict visitor restrictions related to COVID-19. In caring for these patients, it is heart wrenching that I am able to visit them in the hospital as a clinician, but their families often cannot. Seeing patients die without their loved ones present is tremendously difficult. Though these difficult times, it is important to remember that these patients and their families are not truly alone, as God is present with them always.

What is important to emphasize from these readings is that God is always with us. God is here to guide us, forgive our sins, and offer us compassion. For those living with mental health concerns or with significant illness, God is with them. Even when it may seem that God is far away, this is not true in this case. These readings hopefully can give comfort and allow us to redirect our worries and concerns to focusing that God is with us always and will continue to be with us for the rest of our lives.

*Reflection by Holy Name Cathedral Parishioner Gina Piscitello*