

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

You can use the *Forward Day by Day* Readers' Guide on your own to enhance your experience of the month's meditations. Gather a group from your parish to explore these questions together or join in the discussion with Forward Movement's online community by visiting us at www.ForwardMovement.org or by following us on Facebook.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DECEMBER 1: If you have pets, what lessons have they taught you about living and loving? How do they point you to God?

DECEMBER 6: Have you felt welcome when you visited a church? Do you make a point of welcoming others?

DECEMBER 9: When you take communion, are you aware of your connection with the Body of Christ throughout the world?

DECEMBER 14: How might this story about a church in Argentina be applicable to us? Metaphorically, does your church face the fields or the town?

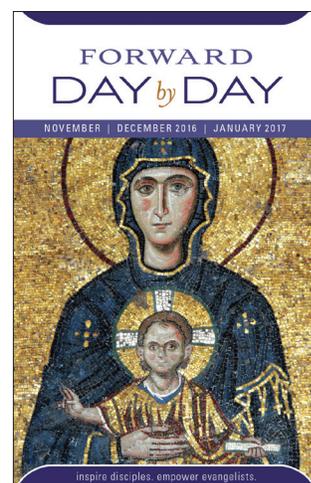
DECEMBER 18: How might you be "perpetually pregnant," ready to give birth to Jesus over and over again?

DECEMBER 27: How does music deepen your experience of worship? What music inspires you most?

DECEMBER 31: How might you walk in the light of Jesus in the new year ahead?

ABOUT THE COVER

This mosaic of the Theotokos is found in the famous Hagia Sofia Museum in Istanbul, Turkey. In this mosaic, Mary seems a bit tired, her features a little weary but still radiant. Baby Jesus looks out wide-eyed, with a curled trinity of bangs on his forehead, perhaps



reminding us of Christmas pictures with our own mothers. We see the fragments of blue, gold, and red wend their way through the lifeless stones and concrete to create whole narratives, and we are reminded of the ways God animates and activates our own dusty bodies and breathless lives in blazing colors and holy inspiration. These mosaics offer an important metaphor for our life in Christ. Each of us is a vital, vibrant individual telling the story of God through our lives and witness, and collectively we come together as part of a magnificent creation, the whole Body of Christ.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hugo Olaiz works for Forward Movement as an associate editor for Latino/Hispanic resources. Hugo was born in Argentina, where he lived half his life. He served a two-year mission in Paraguay. In college he studied classics, linguistics, and translation. He lives in Oxford, Ohio, with his husband John-Charles and an old beagle-mix dog named Patches.

THE ANGLICAN CYCLE OF PRAYER

At the end of every meditation in Forward Day by Day is the day's entry for the Anglican Cycle of Prayer (ACP). Maintained by the Anglican Communion Office in England, the ACP is a way to pray for every diocese and province in the Anglican Communion over a period of two years. The Anglican Communion has eighty million members in more than 160 countries—reflecting an astounding array of languages, cultures, and ministries.

Anglican Cycle of Prayer Spotlight: Forward Movement and Episcopal Relief & Development invite you to pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world and with special intention for the Church in Tanzania.

From episcopalrelief.org:

Though Tanzania enjoys a large degree of political and social stability, drought and disease are still major concerns for many, especially in rural areas. Unpredictable weather and environmental degradation pose challenges for farmers, and malaria is a significant cause of illness and death, particularly for children under five.

Episcopal Relief & Development is partnering with the Anglican Diocese of Central Tanganyika and its Development Services Company to train local farmers, both men and women, in environmentally sustainable agriculture and livestock practices that will help to renew the fertility of their fields and pastures. Our program distributes seeds for quick-growing, drought-resistant plants that will provide shade, improve the quality of the soil and make it possible for other crops to eventually be replanted. In addition, participants can learn about food processing and basic veterinary care for animals to help grow their operations and increase their income.



Photo Credit: episcopalrelief.org

The Development Services Company has also initiated Village Savings & Loans Associations (VSLAs) in several of its project sites. Sharing a desire to access funds to start small businesses or other income-generating activities, the participants—mostly women—save a small amount each week into a common fund, from which small loans can be taken. Through saving and investing in their small businesses, participants have access to funds to provide for the health and education of their families.

The Church in Tanzania also participates in NetsforLife®, our program partnership to fight malaria. The program trains volunteers to distribute long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets and educate communities on their proper use to help prevent the disease. To date, we have partnered with the Dioceses of Dar e Salaam, Central Tanganyika and Western Tanganyika. For more information about NetsforLife®, please visit our NetsforLife® page.

Source: www.episcopalrelief.org



Forward
Movement

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Share your thoughts and insights:

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