

January Newsletter

Friends,

I write on Gaudete Sunday, a rainy day in Illinois, after a frustrating Chicago Bears loss. But it is the last week of Advent, and I love Christmas! Rejoice! I hope you have had a chance to meet with gratitude the gift of the Incarnation and the many gifts in your life. Did you meet the New Year with hope and celebration or quietly and contemplatively?

The reading from Thessalonians should be a good scriptural start for the new year. For our Topics, we have a little work—Pope Francis' follow-up to *Laudato Si'*, a 16-page apostolic declaration called *Laudate Deum*, and a short article from America by Peter Knox, "'Laudato Si' to 'Laudate Deum': What has changed in Pope Francis' climate teaching?"

I am inviting individual and group reflection on one of the four Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus, Caring for our Common Home, to start the year. I suggest this after spending time with my grandchildren and pondering the world they are inheriting. I am also concerned about my own capacity for—or reluctance to—change. So I invite conversation, understanding the great capacity of groups to support change.

Last month, I recommended David Brook's new book, and this month I am recommending an important book by Arthur C. Brooks (no relation to David) and Oprah Winfrey: *Build the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier*. I recommend the book because the first half is one of the best explanations I have seen of emotional intelligence and its importance in building a life. And the second half of the book focuses on application of emotions to what Brooks call the four pillars of happiness—family, friendship, work, and faith. This is a great book for young adults and for the rest of us!

Last, there have been a few deaths in our groups this past year, and I want to remind you of the short but rich book, *The Myth of Closure: Ambiguous Loss in a Time of Pandemic and Change* by Pauline Boss. The change of year signals a transition, and in transitions loss and grief play a role.

Know that it is a privilege to read and write for IBC and to welcome the new year with faith, hope, and love.

Wishing you a happy, healthy, and faith-filled new year!

John Fontana



MISSION

The Mission of the Ignatian Business Chapters is to establish and lead a national and international network of business executives to explore their respective religious traditions in order to help the individual executives

- integrate faith, family, and professional life,
- develop a corporate culture that is reflective of their religious faith and values, and
- exercise a beneficial influence upon society at large.

The chapters, grounded in the Roman Catholic tradition, welcome believers who are open to and respectful of one another's religious traditions. They are committed to the conviction that ethics and values grow out of one's religious heritage.

SCRIPTURE READING:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

ARTICLES

[“‘Laudato Si’ to ‘Laudate Deum’: What has changed in Pope Francis’ Climate Teaching?”](#)

by Peter Knox, *America Magazine*.

[Laudate Deum](#)



REFLECTION

Be attentive: Consider this session an invitation to do a “care for our shared home” assessment or audit to start the new year. What are you noticing about climate change, your knowledge and its impact on you, your organizations, and your families?

Be intelligent: How do you assess the case that Pope Francis makes? Does his sense of urgency impact you? Do you see it as a call to action?

Be reasonable: Peter Knox, in his article, sets up a continuum of denial to increased awareness to action. Where are you on the continuum? What are you seeing happening personally, in your family and community, and at work?

Be responsible: What were key insights that surfaced in today’s discussion? Any food for further contemplation? Any action steps? What are the implications for you at work, in your community, and at home? Leverage the conversation for good!



CLOSING PRAYER

Personal Prayer of Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

Grant me, O Lord, to see everything now with new eyes;
to discern and test the spirits that help me read the signs of the times;
to relish the things that are yours, and to communicate them to others.
Give me the clarity of understanding that you gave Ignatius.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen!

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