



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — November 29, 2023

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## From the Bishop

### As this busy season begins, don't forget to slow down and listen for God

*This is a transcript of a video message.*

This is Bishop Hughes in the Diocese of Newark. It is the last Wednesday in November, and the last Wednesday before the start of Advent this Sunday, that time of joyful expectation and preparation, as we make ourselves ready for the celebration of Christmas. I'm really aware of the increase to my schedule, and the increase to everybody's schedule around me as activities that are particular to this time of year, all begin to start to happen. There are more gatherings, there are more events, there are more meetings, there are more responsibilities – there seems to always be more to do, there certainly is more to worry about with what is happening in the world around us, and how we want our families to be healthy and happy during this time and safe. It seems that our plates are very full.

And in all of this, I keep hearing the words that we hear in Mark, as Jesus talked to the disciples, they had just been sent out and done their first time doing ministry on their own. He sent them out to go heal the sick, cast out demons, take nothing with you, share good news with people. And then they came back and they were talking with him about that and so full of excitement. And they have that conversation and he says to them, "Come away with me to a quiet place where you can rest" – that after big activity, after big ministry, there is this need for rest.

I'm really aware over the last few months of the number of people who have told me what it has meant to them to incorporate Sabbath into their lives. To, in

some cases, look at it as a day of the week. Some it's a time period, it's a particular afternoon of the week. And some have told me they actually look for a piece of Sabbath every day, that it's a part of their lunchtime, or a part of their mid-afternoon break – time to simply shut their eyes and ask themselves, "Where's the joy? Where's the gratitude? Where are the things where I am able to see God?" They take that piece of quiet.

It strikes me that when we're in the midst of this incredible busyness that is this time of year, that we may miss the opportunity to hear the messages that God has that are uniquely for us – messages of encouragement, messages of hope, messages of inspiration, messages to keep us going not only in a busy time, but in a complex and in a demanding time. That there are ways that God will speak to us, but sometimes it takes slowing down to see them.

So I know I cannot make anybody take Sabbath time. I can't make anyone slow down. But I can encourage you. And I can also say to those who find quiet to be an incredibly upsetting and unnerving place to be, that if you can at least be in the quiet for a moment or two even, even if it's just 30 seconds, that in that quiet, God might have a special message of comfort or hope or healing for you. And as you make your way through Advent to Christmas, my prayer is that each of you, every single one of you is able to hear that message as often as possible from God, a God who loves you.



## Bishop Hughes' 2024 Study Group

# This is My Story:

Learning to see, talk, and share stories of faith

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Many of us remain silent when given the opportunity to talk about faith. What are faithful people to say when faced with loss, pain, or fear?

Bishop Hughes' 2024 Study Group will focus on learning how to talk about faith and developing an ease with using language of faith both inside and outside of our faith communities.

*Four consecutive  
Tuesday evenings:*

**Jan 9 & 16**

7-8:30 PM  
via Zoom

**Jan 23 & 30**

7-8:30 PM  
in person, location TBA

**Find out more and register online by Jan. 8 at**  
**[dioceseofnewark.org/bishops-study-group-2024](https://dioceseofnewark.org/bishops-study-group-2024)**