

LIVING and CELEBRATING ADVENT - WEEK 1

JESUS is our HOPE.

Hope believes that the best is yet to come.

Christ, in You, is the hope of glory.

It is HE Whom we proclaim.

Colossians 1: 27



O Emmanuel, Jesus Christ,
Hope of every nation,
Savior of all peoples,
Come and dwell among us.

REMEMBERING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

In the Garden of Eden after the fall, God promised to send a Redeemer. For countless centuries God abided with His people and still does so today as we patiently and hopefully await the second coming of the Lord in Sacred Scripture, Sacrament, one another, and on the last day.

In the name of God the Father Who is Creator, in the name of His Son Jesus, Who is our Hope and Salvation, and in the name of the Spirit Most Holy Who calls us to Life and to Light. Amen.

HYMN: ADVENT GATHERING

Refrain

Gather in hope, people of God.

Sing the Advent song!

Song of faith, song of trust,

A song to welcome the Christ.

Let the warmth of our love,

Like the long summer days,

Prepare the way of the Lord,

Prepare the way of the Lord.

Let our will for justice,

As strong as the sun,

Prepare the way of the Lord,

Prepare the way of the Lord. Refrain

Let our thirst for the truth,
Like the dry, parched earth,
Prepare the way of the Lord,
Prepare the way of the Lord.
Let our dream for peace,
As bright as the sky,
Prepare the way of the Lord,
Prepare the way of the Lord. Refrain

Let the prophet be heard,
Like the blaze of fire,
Prepare the way of the Lord,
Prepare the way of the Lord.
Let the poor and the rich,
As the lamb and the lion,
Prepare the way of the Lord,
Prepare the way of the Lord. Refrain



Reader 1: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness -- on them light has shined... For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:2, 6

Reader 2: Today we remember the prophets of old, who demanded to be heard, who dared to speak of a child to come, unexpected liberator of the people, vulnerable incarnation of the Holiest of Holies, and a new name for God.

People: Today we give thanks for the prophets among us, who bring to us surprising new visions of hope, who challenge us to think outside the box, who show us a future we never anticipated.

PRAYER BEFORE THE READINGS FROM SACRED SCRIPTURE

Wait for the Lord you Christian people for His day is near.
Hear the Lord O Christian people be strong and take heart.
Hope in the Lord O you Christian people for the Lord
is our Light and Salvation.

1 CORINTHIANS 1: 3-9

I give thanks to my God always on your account
for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus,
that in Him you were enriched in every way,
with all discourse and all knowledge,
as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you,

so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift
as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
He will keep you firm to the end,
Irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
God is faithful, and he called you to fellowship with His Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

GOSPEL: MARK 13:33-37

Jesus said to His disciples:

“Be watchful! Be alert!

You do not know when the time will come.

It is like a man traveling abroad.

He leaves home and places his servants in charge,
each with his own work, and orders the gatekeeper
to be on the watch. Watch, therefore; you do not know
when the Lord of the house is coming,
whether in the evening, or at midnight,
or at cockcrow, or in the morning.

May he not come suddenly and find you sleeping.

What I say to you, I say to all: “Watch!”

ADVENT REFLECTION

The Christian virtue of hope is different from optimism. Optimism usually refers to a positive outlook on life based on favorable signs. The outlook is good. And optimism often refers to what we believe we can accomplish or bring about through our own efforts. Christian hope is something much deeper and more substantial than that. Saint Thomas Aquinas, the great 13th century theologian, once spoke of hope in a very simple way. He said that hope means “clinging to God as the source of absolute goodness.” The virtue of hope enables us to face the reality of our lives. It allows us to address even the difficult and disheartening aspects of life – the conflicts in our families, the reality of illness, the pain of loss, our economy and joblessness. But hope moves us to face those realities while clinging to God -- holding on to the hand of God -- who is the source of absolute goodness.

The virtue of hope is for those times that don't look very hopeful. It means an abiding in God as the One Who knows all about us, Who is closer to us than we are to ourselves. This is the God Who walks with us through whatever difficulties we have to face. This is the God Who is sheer goodness and Whose goodness will have the final word in our lives. It is this virtue of hope – clinging to God as the source of absolute goodness – that enables us to keep going in the present.

During the weeks of Advent before the celebration of Christmas, it would be good if we asked the Lord to renew the gift of hope in our lives. Let us ask Christ to help us cling more closely to Him as the Source of absolute

goodness. Advent is also a season in which we need to ask ourselves whether we are signs of hope to others. Through what we say and do, by the way we relate to others, do we offer hope to those who may be discouraged, disillusioned or just overburdened by life? Do we make the effort to encourage others during their difficult times? When people talk to us, do they come away from that conversation with a little more hope? Do I, even in the ordinary interactions of life, reflect a ray of the absolute goodness that God is?

As we pray together at the Eucharist, we make memory of the Lord Jesus Who came to us once as a child and Who will come again in glory. He is the Redeemer Who was sent by the Father because of God's pure goodness. As we receive Christ in the Eucharist, may we cling to Him each day and become a more luminous sign of hope to the world.

I cried unto You, O LORD, and said:
You are my hope, and my portion in the land of the living.
Psalm 142:6

A LITANY OF HOPE

Behold, they say, 'Our bones
are dried up, and our hope is
lost; we are clean cut off. Ezekiel 37:11

RESPONSE:

Come from the four winds,
O breath of God,
and breathe upon these
that they may have hope and live.

1. God of hope
we bring before you
those whose lives are dried up:
We pray for those dried up
by disappointment
by bitterness
by guilt...
We pray for those
whose spirit is drained
by grief
by hunger
by despair... RESPONSE

2. God of hope
we bring before You
those whose hope is lost:
We pray for people
persecuted
violated
left for dead...
We pray for people
bewildered
disillusioned
apathetic... RESPONSE

3. God of hope
we bring before You
those who feel themselves cut off:
We pray for those cut off
by age
by disability
by thoughtlessness...
We pray for those cut off
from family
from neighbors
from God... RESPONSE

4. God of hope
we thank You for the promise of restoration
of a new day and a new life:
Thanks be to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

PRAYER

O Come, God of our Hope-
We invite your Word into our hearts.
May we be awake and alert
to Your presence in our world,
to Your hope for our world.
Call us out of our apathy,
out of our own selfish desires.
Help us to live as people who strive
to unite, rather than divide,
to build up, rather than destroy,
to spread light, rather than darkness.
Make Your vision and hope for this world
our own vision, and grant us the wisdom, courage and strength
to work towards it. Amen.

BLESSING

May God, the source of hope,
fill you with all joy and peace
by means of your faith in Him,
so that your hope will
continue to grow by the power
of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Live Jesus in our hearts.
Today, tomorrow and forever!



Blessed are they who trust in the LORD,
and whose hope is the LORD.