



1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

WITH HEARTS PREPARED

Praying, Talking, and Living God's Word during Advent

PRAYING WITH GOD'S WORD



Leader:

We begin this time of prayer: in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader:

God of our waiting, this week we begin looking ahead with hope to our celebration of the birth of your Son who came among us as a helpless infant. Teach us this Advent Season to grow in our relationship with you. Help us to make this Advent season a time to remember you and a time to give to others.

1st Reader:

As we begin the season of Advent, let us take a few minutes think of how we are going to prepare our hearts for Christ's birth. (Pause)

The first candle lit on our wreath symbolizes hope. We are a people of hope called to bring the light of Christ to others.

Listen to this story and consider how you will reflect the light of hope this week.

Hope has a place painted in the sky. By God's great hand, for

you and I - there is a symbol of hope for the promise he made. Painted in colors of the rainbow by the hand of grace.

Arching through the clouds like a bridge to beyond, I can almost see the down trodden gathering to travel across. Pastel shades in splendour reach across the sky, to proclaim his compassion for you and I.

Colours fading together in each become lost, Remind us gently we are in his thoughts. A vision of hope painted with such wondrous love, No other beauty has ever compared. One glance of the rainbow makes it perfectly clear: He is in control and there is nothing to fear. He made a promise and we all should know, Hope has a place when you see a rainbow!

Bowed in the sky like a ribbon of love, a bridge of hope reaching to Heaven above. A way for the weary and all who believe, we can travel to places our hearts only see. A picture painted for those who know ... There is a bridge for the journey and a place for hope! (Author [Paige Gray](#))

2nd Reader:

As we bring our time of prayer to a close, let us offer the petitions we have within us.

After someone speaks, please respond "God of Hope, hear our prayer."

Leader:

Bringing all these prayers together, let us pray in the words that Jesus taught us:

All: *Our Father . . .*

Leader:

God our loving Father, sometimes it's hard to be hopeful. Help us to see that no matter how bleak things may seem at times, there is always the possibility of a better tomorrow. Help us to be hopeful about ourselves and our future, and help us to act on that hope by making good choices. Fill us with hope for the future so we may rejoice in the gift of the present moment. Christ be our light of hope this week.

All: Amen.

Leader:

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.



TALKING ABOUT GOD'S WORD



Reader:

In the Advent season we are called as Catholic Christians to “wait in joyful hope.” But what does it mean to “wait in joyful hope”? As a family, write down a few ideas of what this means. Once done, we will reflect on the meaning as we continue.

To be “joyful in hope” is to know that we have been promised everlasting lasting life. Fear dulls our hope and despite these fears a light of hope remains. Christ is the light which brings us hope and is the one for whom we wait. It is a struggle to hope in that which we cannot physically grasp or see, but hope does not need to have tangible things. Hope is having the knowledge that faith and love will be the source of strength when all seems lost.

St. Paul reminds us that Christ came into our world to give us everlasting hope. By dying on the cross, Christ opened the doors of Heaven for us and gave us everlasting life. Without Christ, our hope would be in vain. Let us now listen to St. Paul’s words:

“Hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much

more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.” (Romans 5:5-11)

During the Advent season, we must remember why we hope. We hope in the resurrection and that Christ will come again to bring us home. For us to profess this in our faith journey, we must live our lives as a people of hope who give hope to others. Therefore, we must be a people of faith who “wait in joyful hope” that Christ will fulfil the promise to come again and unite us all together.

Discussion Questions:

1. Where is it hard to see hope in the world? How might we be a people of “joyful hope”?
2. As Catholics we believe “Christ will come again” (second coming). Consider what this statement of faith means for you. How do you live your life as a reflection of the hope that Christ will come again?
3. What are you doing to grow in your relationship with God? How are you a person of hope to others?

LIVING GOD’S WORD

For this week’s act of service, there are three choices you as a family can make:

1. *As individuals take the time to speak to a member of the parish community you do not know after Mass. Consider a person who you see weekly, but never took the time to say “hello.”*
2. *Take the time as a family to visit a person in your community who lives alone or does not have family nearby.*
3. *Each family member writes a letter or email to a person they have not spoken with for a long time. For example, write a letter to a distant friend or extended family member you do not speak to regularly.*