

# A Time of Hope

A D V E N T 2 0 1 8

## HOPE FOR THE CHURCH TODAY

*"Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit."*

(CCC 1817)

*"I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope: The favors of the Lord are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent; They are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness. My portion is the Lord, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him. Good is the Lord to one who waits for him, to the soul that seeks him; It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord."*

-Lamentations 3:21-

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Our intense desire is to see the Church become what Christ intended it to be: one, holy, and entirely dedicated to the pursuit of that perfection to which Christ called it and for which He qualified it. In its pilgrimage through the world the Church must really strive to manifest that ideal of perfection envisaged for it by the divine Redeemer. Here, therefore, we have the greatest problem confronting the living Church. It is a problem which shows how powerful and effective the Church really is. It goads it into action, submits it to searching criticism and keeps it true to its purpose. It engenders in the Church prayer and compunction, repentance and hope, toil and confidence, the spirit of adventure and achievement.

It is a problem which arises from the very nature of the truths revealed by God and their special

relevance to our lives as human beings. For without reference to Christ's teaching handed on by the Church, it is not possible for man to pass judgment on himself and his own nature, his former state of perfection and the ruinous consequences of original sin, his capacity for good and his need for help in desiring and achieving what is good, the importance and purpose



of this present life, the good that he seeks or already possesses, how best to acquire perfection and holiness, and how to attain to the highest degree of perfection and completeness.

Hence the Church must be gripped with an intense and unflinching desire to learn the ways of the Lord. It is Our dearest wish that all those valuable discussions concerning Christian perfection which have gone on for so many centuries in the Church, shall once again receive the importance they deserve and arouse the faithful, not indeed to formulate new rules of spirituality, but to generate new energies in striving after the holiness which Christ has taught us. His own words and example, his guidance and assistance, have made it possible for us to know about this holiness and to desire it and achieve it. This method of spirituality which is confirmed by the custom and tradition of the Church, established by the united action of its members, and exemplified in the outstanding lives of the Saints.

- Saint Paul VI

## RECLAIMING THE GREAT HOPE FOR GOD

We need the greater and lesser hopes that keep us going day by day. But these are not enough without the great hope, which must surpass everything else. This great hope can only be God, who encompasses the whole of reality and who can bestow upon us what we, by ourselves, cannot attain. The fact that it comes to us as a gift is actually part of hope. God is

the foundation of hope: not any god, but the God who has a human face and who has loved us to the end, each one of us and humanity in its entirety. His Kingdom is not an imaginary hereafter, situated in a future that will never arrive; his Kingdom is present wherever he is loved and wherever his love reaches us. His love alone gives us the possibility of soberly

persevering day by day, without ceasing to be spurred on by hope, in a world which by its very nature is imperfect. His love is at the same time our guarantee of the existence of what we only vaguely sense and which nevertheless, in our deepest self, we await: a life that is "truly" life.

-from Spe Salvi, 31  
Pope Benedict XVI

## A WORD OF HOPE

*"There was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face." - 1 Kings 19:12-13*

### FIRST WEEK

**Sunday** Mk 13:33-37  
**Monday** Is 2:1-5  
**Tuesday** Ps 72  
**Wednesday** Is 25:6-10  
**Thursday** Matt 7:21-27  
**Friday** Ps 98  
**Saturday** Is 30:19-21

### SECOND WEEK

**Sunday** Mk 1:1-8  
**Monday** Ps 85  
**Tuesday** Zech 2:14-17  
**Wednesday** Ps 103  
**Thursday** Lk 1:26-38  
**Friday** Matt 11:16-19  
**Saturday** Sir 48:1-11

### THIRD WEEK

**Sunday** Jn 1:6-8, 19-28  
**Monday** Jer 23:5-8  
**Tuesday** Jgs 13:2-7  
**Wednesday** Is 7:10-14  
**Thursday** Sgs 2:8-14  
**Friday** Lk 1:57-66  
**Saturday** Lk 1:67-79



### FOURTH WEEK

**Sunday** Ps 89  
**Monday** Mt 1:1-25

DAILY READINGS FOR ADVENT

*"Faith consists in accepting God without asking him to account for things according to our standard. Faith consists in reacting before God as Mary did: I don't understand it, Lord, but let it be done in me according to your word."*

*- Saint Oscar Romero*

## DAILY LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*As we make the Sign of the Cross, the leader says:*

Our help is in the name of the Lord.  
R/. Who made heaven and earth.

*A song may be sung as the candle is lighted*

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

*Opening Prayer*

Open our minds and our hearts, O Lord, to hear your word of promise! Send us the Holy Spirit to guide us through these holy days. Quiet our worries and anxieties and help us to wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ who is Lord for ever and ever. R/. Amen.

*Scripture Reading (see Daily Readings)*

*A reflection may be shared about the Reading*

*Concluding Prayer*

Lord our God, we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ: He is Emmanuel, the hope of the peoples, He is the Wisdom that teaches and guides us, He is the Savior of every nation.

Lord God, let your blessing come upon us as we light the candles of this wreath. May the wreath and its light be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us salvation. May He come quickly and not delay.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

*As we make the Sign of the Cross, we say:*

May the Lord bless us,  
protect us from all evil,  
and bring us everlasting life. R/. Amen.