

Advent Week One
HOPE: The Light of the World
December 1-7, 2019

Spiritual writer, Jan Richardson says of Advent: “The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before ... What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, like Moses in the cleft of the rock, watching God’s [back] fade in the distance. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running. For rushing. For worrying. For pushing. For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon.”

Advent begins four Sundays before December 24th each year, and for us liturgical types, it begins the church year, hence the name Advent, which means “beginning” or “coming.” In Advent, we wait with longing for the arrival of the Christ child. We know that this glorious day is coming, but it has not yet arrived. We wait and we are nourished with the hope of what is to come, but is not here yet.

[L] [SEP]As the days become shorter and the nights become longer, we wait for the Light of the World. Our culture and the marketing of it leaves little space for waiting. It’s a minute-to-win-it, Amazon Prime existence where the possibilities of getting what one wants quickly are endless. But if we lose waiting, do we also lose a critical understanding of what it means to hope for the light that will come?

Hope is too precious a thing, too necessary, too powerful to let slip through your fingers. Sit, wait, and become friends with what it means to hope again. The light is coming, but it is not here yet.

There is a sense of waiting in Luke’s gospel: “Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.”

Scripture:

Isaiah 2:4b-5: (CEB) Then they will beat their swords into iron plows and their spears into pruning tools. Nation will not take up sword against nation; they will no longer learn how to make war. 5 Come, house of Jacob, let’s walk by the Lord’s light.

Matthew 5:3-12: (NRSV) “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5 “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke 6:20-21: (NRSV) Then he looked up at his disciples and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 “Blessed are you who are

hungry now for you will be filled. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.”

Readings:

“Hope is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all.”
-Emily Dickenson

“Light is less something you see directly, and more something by which you see all other things.”

Richard Rohr in *The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope for and Believe*, p. 32

From the sorrow of having just lost his wife and child in August of 1932 from his Chicago home, Thomas Dorsey wrote:

“Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand;
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light,
Take my hand, precious Lord,
Lead me home.”

Prayer: Center this thought in prayer this week,

*O God the Light of the World,
prepare my heart, for Emmanuel is coming.
Teach me hope in the waiting. Amen.*

Questions to consider: As you find a quiet place to sincerely reflect on this season of your life: who is your hope in? What is your hope in? Is hope perched in your soul? What will you wait and long for this Advent?

Spiritual Practices: Invite prayer into your week; more specifically, consider centering prayer wherein you choose a word and you walk with it all day. You think about it, you say it aloud, you center it in prayer all the day long, as you do dishes, drive, and even as you are falling asleep. Consider choosing a word that stems from hope. It could be: anticipation, glory, the present and coming kingdom, passion, comfort, light, waiting, etc. Let the word take different forms throughout the day. Wonder about it, use it in inner conversation, use it in a conversation with your loved one. Let it become a part of the dialogue of your day. Make it your prayer. Be intentional with it so that you don't go into autopilot mode.

Catch the Sunday Advent sermon for December 1st (posted on Monday) [here](#).