

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

A Blazing Light of Hope

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.

Isaiah 9:2

*Thus the hope of those who belong to the living Christ is a hope rooted in what has already occurred, even if the total fullness of this event has not yet been revealed. Thus the Christian community, wherever it emerges, marks a new world in the midst of the old, of light in the midst of darkness. (Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Peacework*, 108)*

Hope is the touchstone of patience. We can be patient because we live in hope. And we have hope because we know Christ and the power of his love. Advent is a time when hope is renewed within us.

Today we light another candle on our Advent wreaths. As the light gets brighter, our hearts open a bit wider to all that God has promised. As the candle flickers, we see the movement of our own lives within its flame—sometimes the fire burns brighter than at other times, but there is always a burning, a light, a blazing hope within us.

May we never walk in the darkness of hopelessness, but may we always hold fast to the fire of hope, the light of Jesus Christ.

Lord Jesus, you are the source of my hope. May I shine this light of hope for others as I wait patiently for your coming. Amen.

MONDAY, THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

Hope in the Lord

Hoping against hope, [Abraham] believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.”

Romans 4:18

*When we live with hope, we do not get tangled up with our concerns for how our wishes will be fulfilled. So too, our prayers are not directed toward the gift, but the one who gives it. (Henri J. M. Nouwen, *With Open Hands*, 69)*

Our hope—like our faith and our love—is directed toward a Person. We do not just have a vague sense that someday things will be better. We are not just optimists who always hope for the best. No, our hope is in Jesus Christ—incarnate, crucified, dead, risen and glorified. In every moment of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, we hope.

During the season of Advent, we focus our hopes on the incarnation of Christ. We allow this hope to reorient us completely. We focus on his coming—in the past, present and future—as a way of focusing on what matters: the giver, not the gift. All that matters is Christ. He will provide all that we need and more than we could ever want.

Jesus Christ, you are God incarnate, God-with-us. Our hope is in you. You will provide us with more than we could ever ask for. Amen.