

ADVENT: A TIME OF HOPE AND LIGHT



Advent is a time of anticipation and preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. In a world scarred by war and poverty, in a hemisphere darkened by early nightfall, we welcome signs of hope and light. Jesus is our hope, our light.

Isaiah describes what we can expect: glad tidings to the poor, the brokenhearted healed, liberty proclaimed to the captives and prisoners released, a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God.

Hope and light.

Every second Sunday in my parish, we process to the altar with our bags of food for St. Vincent de Paul. We've been doing this generous giving for almost 12 years.

Five Catholic Churches and two other congregations take turns serving Sunday dinners at Faith Café. Faith Café opened its doors 9 ½ years ago. You can expect an overflow of guests, especially near the end of the month, and it is a blessing to have dozens of volunteers bringing glad tidings to the poor.

There will come a day when we won't need to donate food for St. Vincent de Paul and we won't need to serve hot meals at Faith Café because hunger won't be a scourge in our community. Whatever our world looks like today, we can do better.

On the Friday before Thanksgiving 200 people joined in the Annual Homeless Awareness Day Campaign—sheltering the homeless – because on any given night, about 4,000 people sleep on the streets or in shelters across Portland. Beaverton School District has 1400 homeless students.

One day we won't have this homelessness. We can do better.

Poverty causes much of our homelessness. If there are 5 people in your pews, statistically 1 of them lives in poverty. Unless it's children then it's 1 of 4.

Most of these families are the working poor. If they have jobs. And they need a job that pays a living wage because without a living wage they can't afford to rent decent housing which is important because much of the low-income housing is owned by a small group of landlords who don't have to listen to the health and safety concerns of their tenants. So often they don't. Often they evict them.

One day there won't be this rampant poverty. I believe we can do better.

12% of Oregonians are Latino. 40% of the Catholics in our Archdiocese are Latino. 1 in 3 Latinos lives in poverty. We probably don't see this because they feel like the unwelcomed stranger.

One day all our brothers and sisters will be welcomed; liberty will be proclaimed. We can do better.

Whatever our world looks like today, we can do better.

While you anticipate the coming of our Savior, let your imagination run free. To shed light on the chains of oppression that darken your path, you must have imagination; you must imagine that the world can be a better place. It is through our collective imagination of a better world that we shine a light on the dark skies of oppression. By imagining we create hope. We give hope to the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives and the prisoners. We welcome the birth of our Savior.

(Readings for Third Sunday of Advent)



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