

December 8, 2019

TIME TO WALK IN THE LIGHT OF HOPE

ADVENT: A TIME TO WALK IN THE LIGHT OF HOPE! On the First Sunday of Advent last week, we heard a most **HOPEFUL PROPHECY** from **ISAIAH (2:1-5)**. Open your bible and go read this amazing vision Isaiah has of Jerusalem: **AN EVERLASTING PEACE!** We all search for **PEACE**. We all search for an ideal place where there will be no more wars, no more battles, no more tensions, no more divisions, no more storms, no more struggles, no more insults, no more abuse, no more hurts ... Isaiah predicts that the Lord will gather people from all over the world into the **ETERNAL PEACE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD (Jerusalem)**. "*They shall beat their swords into plow shares and their spears into pruning hooks*". We are all invited to **WALK IN THE LIGHT OF THE LORD. THE LORD JESUS IS OUR ONLY HOPE. HE IS HOPE!** This Advent let us **WALK TOGETHER IN THE LIGHT OF HOPE!**

THE CANDLE OF HOPE was lit on the First Sunday of Advent. We have three more candles to light before Christmas: **PEACE, JOY** (the rose one) and **LOVE**. The four banners hanged in the Sanctuary represent those four candles. Our **ADVENT JOURNEY BEGINS WITH HOPE**. Our hope is in the Lord Jesus who is our only savior and our only guide to lead us to that eternal peace, **HEAVEN**. Let us walk together in the Light, who is Jesus, who is Hope!

Let us pray with St Paul (Romans 15:13): "*May the GOD of HOPE fill you with ALL JOY and PEACE in your FAITH, so that in the POWER of the HOLY SPIRIT you may be RICH IN HOPE*". What a fitting prayer for our Advent Journey. I invite you to meditate on it in silence. Think about a recent event where you have found **HOPE**. Think about how that **HOPE** came about.

We have already begun our Advent Journey with the **LIGHT OF HOPE**. WE have already begun to **CLIMB THE LORD'S MOUNTAIN**. Let us imagine that this is our first-ever Advent. Let us imagine that we live in the time of Mary and Joseph, 2,000 years ago and that like the Jewish people of the time we are expecting with trepidation the coming of the Messiah. Our Advent Journey is to lead to Bethlehem where we will rejoice with the shepherds and Angels. Despite the steep paths we must climb; we are not tired because our strong **FAITH** in **GOD** gives us that strong **HOPE** in eternal life. The Power of the **HOLY SPIRIT** will give us

the **FRUITS OF PEACE, JOY AND LOVE** (the last three candles of the Advent Wreath).

Hope is the light, which guides our steps away from the darkness of our sinfulness. We have just celebrated our Advent Penance Service, as part of our Advent Journey. We have turned toward the Lord, taking the first steps climbing the Lord's mountain. We have promised the Lord that with His help we will do everything possible to stay in the Light, away from the darkness, away from the chains of sins. Jesus Christ is our Light on this journey. We had several baptisms in the last few days, and it was a **JOY** to see the godparents hold that bright candle illuminating the face of the babies, infants just baptized: the Candle of Baptism lit from the Paschal Candle.

I will never forget the early morning that I found myself surrounded by a thick fog. I was then a 4th year seminarian in Boston (2008-2009) and I was serving every weekend at the beautiful Immaculate Conception Parish in Salem, right next to the harbor. There was a long, narrow jetty with a lighthouse at the end. Early in the morning, I would walk all the way to the lighthouse. It was always very peaceful. Despite the fog that morning, I chose to walk all the way to the lighthouse. I could not see further than three feet ahead. Of course, I could not see the lighthouse at all. But I **KNEW** that it was there. So, very slowly I walked forward and finally made it to the lighthouse. I share this story because many times in our lives, we become desperate, hopeless. We do not see where we are going. We are kind of lost in a dense fog. But if we keep **HOPE** that we can continue our journey even through the dense fog, we will reach the **LIGHTHOUSE**, the House of the Lord, the Lord himself at the end of our Journey.

The **ADVENT JOURNEY** is an internal journey, a spiritual journey inside our Heart. Let us pray that we can keep walking in the **LIGHT OF HOPE**. **CHRIST, YOU ARE OUR ONLY LIGHT, YOU ARE OUR ONLY HOPE!**

One in Christ,
Fr. Alain

