

Day 260 – Saturday December 5, 2020

To my readers I should have sent this our last Sunday, but I did not come across it until a few days ago.

Candles in Advent: Week 1 – The Candle of Hope

Christmas is coming! There are loved ones to see, gifts to give, baking to share. We prepare our homes for the celebration. Yet even more important than this outward preparation is the preparation of our heart. The Advent season is a beautiful reminder to prepare our hearts as we prepare our homes — to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus! At the start of this week, we light the first of the four candles in the Advent wreath: the candle of Hope.

Is your heart filled with hope? Do you have a confident expectation of your tomorrow? What happens when the road ahead is filled with loss and stress weighs your shoulders down? When confident expectation for tomorrow dwindles, what can you do? How can you walk in hope when you feel hopeless inside? In one word, the answer to confident expectation is “JESUS” — the Jesus of Christmas. Hope in Jesus comes from more than just a belief that He was once a baby in a manger. This hope in Him has been called “*an anchor for the soul.*” It is something deep within that secures you through the storms of life. Putting your hope in Jesus will give you these four things.

HOPE FOR HELP

We are invited to come to Him and confidently ask for help. Hebrews 4:16 tells us, “*to come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in our time of need*” (Hebrews 4:16).

HOPE TO OVERCOME

Things that leave one feeling powerless and hopeless come in many forms. With Christ’s strength you can overcome great obstacles, and faith in Jesus gives hope and help to overcome: “*and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith*” (1 John 5:4).

HOPE FOR POWER

Sometimes in life we find ourselves with a task that simply looks too big for us. We do not just need a cup of God’s strength added to our own; rather, we need His strength in us to do what we need to do. He will give it! 2 Corinthians 12:9 says, “*My grace is sufficient for you: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*” Seeing our weakness as the entry point of God’s strength gives access to His power!

HOPE FOR ETERNITY

When we put our faith and hope in Jesus, it not only gives us help, strength, and power for where we walk today, but it also gives us hope for life after death. It is a confident expectation of the ultimate “tomorrow.” The God of Hope sent His son to be our Savior. He is only one prayer away. If you want the confident expectation of His strength and wisdom in your today and His help and hope for your tomorrow, you need only ask so that you may overflow with hope. “*May*

the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace, as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Here is a suggested prayer to receive abundant hope:

Dear God, I have gone my own way and have put my hope in so many things that have disappointed me. Thank you that you sent Jesus, that first Christmas long ago, to be my Savior. I believe He came for me. Forgive me and lead me today. Show me how to live in the confident expectation of how You can impact my life, my character, and my circumstances. I place my hope in You right now and ask You to make Yourself known to me in my life right where I walk. I thank you. I pray this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

“Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand, champagne in the other, body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming “WOO HOO what a ride!” (Hunter S. Thompson)

Sincerely,
Fr. Jim Kaptein