

Homily 1st Sunday of Advent Year B 2020

We open the season of Advent warmly greeted by our Advent Wreath. The evergreen circle, bearing candles, speaks of undying love and never-ending life. Lighting the first candle brings the wreath to life with the promise of much more to come. The previous liturgical cycle ended with the words ***Stand fast, take courage, trust me!*** They are repeated again today with the promise of something absolutely new; not just the promise of a hope that will change our lives but also the lives of our families, our parish, our town, our nation, our world!

The other exciting tradition of Advent is the Advent calendar. Each flap hides a thought, a word, a scene, a phrase for reflection. Each day offers us something new but also keeps us awake to the season and time in which we are living. This is for all of us, not just for children, all of us. As we move through Advent, we learn that each day has something new to offer if we are awake to it. It helps prepare us to be awake for the birth of Christ, not just on Christmas day but every day. It makes Advent a journey to God with God, because Christ is born anew each day of our lives. Acrostics for HOPE suggest the following: **Help One Person Everyday; Holding On, Praying Expectantly; Have Only Positive Expectations.**

While **JOHN MAXWELL** offers these insights into the power of Hope:

Hope shines brightest when the hour is the darkest.

Hope motivates when discouragement comes.

Hope energizes when the body is tired.

Hope sweetens while bitterness bites.

Hope sings when all melodies are gone.

Hope believes when the evidence is eliminated.

Hope listens for answers when no one is talking.

Hope climbs over obstacles when no one is helping.

Hope endures hardship when no one is caring.

Hope smiles confidently when no one is laughing.

Hope reaches for answers when no one is asking.

Hope presses toward victory when no one is encouraging.

Hope dares to give when no one is sharing.

Hope brings the victory when no one is winning.

This is what Advent hope offers, what Jesus offers, even before Christmas. Yet when he comes there will be so much more to receive. We need all the time that Advent has to offer to be properly prepared.

Samantha didn't receive the astronomy scholarship she hoped for. But the school did name a cluster of stars after her. It was a **constellation prize**.

The government in Egypt has asked the city's taxi drivers to drive around Cairo sounding their car horns. It is hoped that the familiar sounds of the city will induce a return to tranquillity and normality following the recent pandemic.

Operation Toot 'n Calm 'Em will last for the rest of the week.