



Advent | Hope

Within our Catholic tradition, important symbols that capture the essence of Advent are the evergreen and the light, both are used to create wreaths. The candles placed within the wreath acknowledge the light of Christ not only in the world, but also in our hearts. One candle is lit each Sunday until all four candles are lit, and sometimes a fifth candle is lit on Christmas. As Christmas draws nearer, each candle brings a little more light into the darkness, the light of Christ's burns brighter and stronger as Christ's birth approaches.

At the beginning of our prayer you are invited to light a candle in contemplative anticipation for hope.

Hope & Journeying

Each of the candles represents an aspect of preparation during the season of Advent. Purple is the primary colour associated with Advent. Within the Catholic Church it symbolises **penance, preparation, and sacrifice**.

During Advent, we look forward to Jesus' coming with hope.

The candle of hope is sometimes called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. It represents the expectation felt in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

*Be a beacon of hope in this
turbulent world ... form homes
that are a light on the hill.*

The XXII General Chapter

Scripture

Mark 13:33-37

"Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

Scripture Reflection

We reflect on Mark's Gospel during Advent

Are we awake or are we asleep? If we are awake, we are aware of our own lives and ready to accept our own weaknesses and struggles and ready to change our lives. Then we are being watchful and are awake. Jesus tells us to stay awake and be alert to the poor, the outcast, the lonely, the despised, and the marginalised.

We get distracted by so many things, by our laziness, our jealousies, our pride and selfishness. And we are just human so how can God expect us to be alert and to keep watch? Our every act of kindness and love and every act of self-sacrifice for another is a small step in welcoming Jesus into our midst and of being awake.

Advent gives us a message of hope and faith. When Jesus came, Jesus helped people to continue to hope in God. Jesus helped the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the poor had the Good News preached to them. Jesus taught people that as children of God nothing could separate them from the love of God. All they needed to do was to hope and trust in His promise.

If we use the days of Advent as an opportunity to reconcile with those who have hurt us, if we use Christmas as an opportunity to share our times and treasures with the less fortunate, if we look for ways to be more loving to others, especially those within our own homes and communities, then we will "be vigilant and stay awake" to welcome Jesus in our hearts and homes.

Our world and its peoples always need hope. We can be both beautifully creative and mindlessly destructive. We may fear the "other." If we then tend to see ourselves as the centre of the universe and our way as the "only true way," conflicts will arise - in families and communities, but also between nations. Living as sisters and brothers offers a hopeful and caring means by which our differences enrich our communion. Marist fraternity becomes a sign of hope for the world with a growing need for tolerance and peace.

Water from the Rock n.120

Pray | Visio Divina



[Mother of Life by Nellie Edwards](#)

Looking at the image...

- **Prepare:** Close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind.
- **Lectio (read):** Open your eyes and scan the image. Note what draws your interest but continue to scan the whole image. Close and rest your eyes a minute.
- **Meditatio (meditate):** Open your eyes and let your eyes be led. Focus on just this part of the image and name it. Close your eyes, seeing that piece of the image in your mind.
- **Oratio (pray):** Open your eyes and look again at the piece of the image that caught your eye. Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.
- **Contemplatio (contemplation):** Open your eyes and gaze at the image.

Reflect

- What is this image saying to you and making you feel?
- What in your opinion, is the subject matter of this painting?
- What is your personal response to the painting?
- What is God speaking to you today through this painting?