

# Hope



Happy Advent! As we begin a new liturgical year, our Lord beckons us to immerse ourselves in the spirit of Advent. Advent is a sacred time. It empowers us to **exercise the great virtue of Hope** as we anticipate the coming of the Lord. At Christmas we will find ourselves once more with our Blessed Mother welcoming the Child Jesus with heartfelt gratitude, wonder, and love. At the same time, the virtue of hope will come to life within us as we are reminded that our Lord will come again in glory at the end of time and every one of our tears and trials will be turned to joy! Is that not reason to rejoice and renew our strength?

Advent is also **a season of repentance**. In the Gospel (Luke 21:25-28; 34-36), Jesus exhorts us to prepare ourselves to meet the Lord: “Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life, and that day catch you by surprise like a trap.” In the Second Reading (1 Thes 3:12-4:2), St. Paul offers a beautiful prayer and admonition which I hope we can all take to heart today:

“May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we have for you, so as to strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his holy ones. . . . we earnestly ask and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that, as you received from us how you should conduct yourselves to please God—and as you are conducting yourselves—you do so even more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus.”

Finally, Advent is **a time of prayer**. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, “Against our dullness and laziness, the battle of prayer is that of humble, trusting, and persevering love” (#2742). I leave you with a beautiful Advent meditation given by Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity (A Carmelite Nun who died in 1906):



“Think what must have been going on in the Virgin’s soul after the Incarnation, when she possessed within her the Word incarnate, the Gift of God. . . . In what silence, what recollection, what adoration she must have buried herself in the depths of her soul in order to embrace this God whose Mother she was. My little Guitte, he is in us. O let us stay close to him in this silence, with this love, of the Virgin. That is the way to spend Advent, isn’t it?”

Well, isn’t it?

Your Servant in Christ,  
Fr. Terry Staples