

Sunday – First Week – Candle of Hope.

The Prophet Isaiah is the main protagonist during the season of Advent. Like every other prophet without exception, Isaiah has a message of hope. This message of hope was present from the initial call of Abraham through Israel's long and turbulent history.

- Abraham hopes that his descendants will number as many as the grains of sand.
- The Israelites in Egypt were there for 400 years. Their status had deteriorated to that of slaves. Yet they had hope.
- All through the forty years in the Sinai desert, they complained but they eventually placed their trust in God.
- Finally, as exiles in Babylon, they hung their harps on the willow trees as we read in Psalm 137. But they still had hope – their hope of returning to Judah and of rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem.

Hope comes in various areas and circumstances in our lives.

1. In desperation, we have hope. A child is lost in the mall; a person is diagnosed with stage four cancer; there are signs that a marriage is falling apart. In each of these scenarios we have hope, where logic might dictate that we should give up.
2. In the area of dreams, we have hope. A person might dream of being selected to represent their country in the Olympics; another might dream of winning a scholarship to a prestigious school or university; a third might dream of being cast in the star role in a Broadway show.

3. In the success of others, we have hope. Parents wish to live in a neighbourhood safe for their children; they wish for the absence of gangs and drugs. This description is hope in its purest sense. It is directed towards others and to their well-being.

God has made it possible for us to have such hopes, such dreams and such wishes come true. God has sent the Spirit with the gifts of wisdom and understanding, the gift of courage to dream the impossible dream and go where the brave dare not go.

God made this hope possible when Mary said “Yes” to the angel Gabriel’s message. Jesus Christ gave us hope with his life, passion, death, and resurrection. Now Jesus wants us to carry on with this hope each day.

You are invited to join us this week as we explore the following themes:

Monday: Hope in Sickness

Tuesday: Hope in Difficult Times

Wednesday: Hope and Hunger

Thursday: Hope and Answered Prayer

Friday: Hope and Healing

Saturday: Hope and the Right Connection