

# Theme of the Week - Hope

On Sunday, we marked the start of Advent and the word advent derives from the word 'adventus' which means 'coming'. During the time of Advent, we wait and expect the coming of Christ at his birth on Christmas Day. So as we start the season of Advent, we also see in our Gospel from Sunday of being told by Jesus to be ready for him. However, this is not in reference to his birth; today's Gospel Jesus tells us to stay awake and be ready for when he returns at the end of time. Just as we prepare for Advent, Jesus tells us to be prepared for when he returns.

In the first reading on Sunday, Isaiah (who some call the Christmas Prophet - A prophet is someone who speaks in the name of God and has been allowed by God to know and share a part of his plan for mankind) tells his people that they are to be known for their faith and hope in God. The hope that God will return to his people and save them. 'Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down! Even when not knowing or being in fear, they should continue to have faith and hope in God.

So with this in mind, reflect on how you usually prepare for a celebration, event or occasion. You may look forward to the event with some excitement; however, as the event draws nearer your feelings may start to morph into some nerves or fear as you hope that all goes well. Why do your feelings change as the time draws nearer? Usually it is because we want to make sure all goes to plan. We become scared as we think we have forgotten something, or have not prepared enough and something is to go wrong. Jesus in Sunday's Gospel tells us to always be on our guard, to always be expecting the end of things, as we know them. There are some things during a time of waiting that we can continue to do to ensure Christ is at the forefront of our lives. Here we can look at the Second reading from St Paul who continues to thank God. But what about us, what can we do? We can join St Paul in prayer, by full and active participation at Mass and in the Eucharist and by participation as an active member of our school community, illustrating Christ in our actions and words with others. It is important to keep that feeling of hope alive and active in our lives and to let others see it. As we face daily struggles we look to Christ for hope, others around you do the same. In our school mission statement of '*Unlocking Belief in All*' we hope to be a beacon of light to others, just as Christ is to us. Unless we live as people of hope, we are stopping others the chance to see our faith in our redemption and in the redemptive teachings of Christ.

We know that Jesus will return at the end of time, but only God knows exactly when that will be. What did Jesus tell us to do? To keep ourselves ready for the time when he will come again. How can we do this? Just as we prepare our homes and put them in order for a visitor, we can prepare our hearts and put our lives in order for Jesus. Advent is a good time to reflect on our own lives! To make things good, and move away from our bad habits so that we can make a fresh start for the coming of Christ. By living each day as Jesus taught us, filled with goodness and love, we will be ready to welcome him when he comes again.

# Hope

Weekly Reflections  
3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023



A reading from the Gospel of St Mark (13:33-37)

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

## Prayer for the Week

Lord God, our light and our salvation, we praise you for your gifts of life and faith.

Help us to meet you in prayer, to walk in your ways, and to speak to others of our hope and consolation in your presence.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Feast Day - 8<sup>th</sup> December

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary



Pope Pius IX proclaimed in 1854:

The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin. Mary was:

*Learned and Wise, Loving and Compassionate, Truthful and eloquent, intentional and prophetic, attentive and discerning, faith-filled and hopeful, curious and active, grateful and generous.*

### Day 1

As we start the season of Advent, what are you hoping for? What are your expectations? How close is Jesus to these expectations?

### Day 2

If someone important is coming to visit you and your family, how do you prepare for this? Do you: - tidy your room and the rest of the house; dust and clean; prepare a meal?

It is easy to be ready for a visitor when you know the time to expect them, but sometimes they arrive unexpectedly and surprise you! Would you find it more difficult to keep everything just as it should be if you did not know when your visitor was coming? If so why?

### Day 3

How this week can you turn bad habits into good?

Try to put Jesus at the centre of our actions so others can have the same hope as we do.