

Advent: Hope in Wintertime

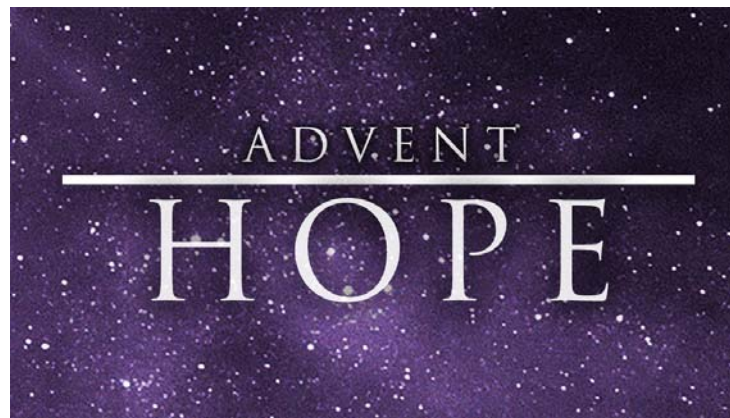
We are now in the Season of Advent!

The Season of Advent, which began on Sunday, is the four weeks leading up to Christmas. Advent is a time to prepare spiritually for our celebration of Jesus' birth at Christmas, a time to prepare to welcome Jesus into our lives even more this Christmas. We also await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time.

Advent is a time of joyful waiting and active preparation. It also marks the beginning of the Church's year.

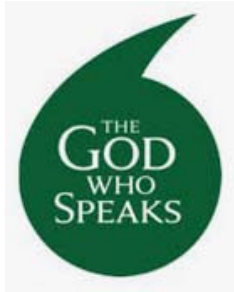
There are many themes and traditions associated with Advent and we will look at some of these in our reflections over the next four weeks.

This week we will look at the theme of "Hope".



*This week's prayers
are prepared by
Laurel Hill Secondary
School FCJ & Laurel
Hill Coláiste FCJ,
Adapted for Upton
Hall FCJ*





Monday 30th December

Let us read the Gospel from Sunday's Mass:

A Reading from St. Mark's Gospel (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!'

The Gospel of the Lord. *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*





Monday 30th November



The Sunday Gospel we have just read asks us to “stay awake” – that is, to be aware of God’s presence with us and to watch out for the many different ways in which God comes into our lives. Advent is a time when we are asked to wait and watch for the coming of Jesus to us at Christmas. During the next 4 weeks, we are asked to prepare our hearts to welcome Jesus when He breaks into our world.

And so we pray...

Lord, help us this Advent to “stay awake” – to be aware of your presence with us and to find a balance in our preparation for Christmas .

Help us to enjoy the material aspects of Christmas without letting them take over and hide the true meaning of Christmas.

Help us, Lord, to be generous with ourselves, our time and our resources, in these weeks leading to Christmas.

During Advent may we make special efforts to reach out to those for whom this will be a difficult time.

We know that this sometimes takes great courage and, so Lord, this Advent we pray for lots of courage, so that we can help others in whatever way we can.

Amen.

Tuesday 1st December

Advent in 2 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eC0FGQLBp7w>

One of the traditions of Advent is the Advent wreath which we often see in churches, schools and sometimes in peoples' homes.

The Advent Wreath is a circle made of evergreen leaves to symbolise God's love for us, which is without beginning or end and which never dies.

There are four candles on the wreath, one for each of the four weeks of Advent. Purple is the colour chosen in churches for the two more reflective times of the year – Advent & Lent – and so often three of these candles are purple. There is usually also a pink candle which is lit on the 3rd Sunday of Advent because that is a Sunday on which the readings especially invite us to “rejoice”. Sometimes there is a 5th candle, in the middle of the wreath, which is lit on Christmas Day – that candle is white and represents the coming of Christ among us.



Tuesday 1st December

We pray...

Loving God, we ask your blessing on us as we begin our Advent journey.

May the Advent wreath made of evergreens remind us that Your love for us is everlasting and that nothing we do will ever take it away.

As the first candle is lit this week, we pray that this Advent we may open our hearts to the light of Christ.

Amen.

Idea: Donate something to charity



Wednesday 2nd December

Advent is a time of waiting. Can you think about what it feels like to wait for things?

Sometimes, we can find waiting for things to be annoying or frustrating – like when we have to wait in a queue for something or when we get stuck in a traffic jam.

Sometimes, we can be waiting excitedly for something – like when we are waiting to go into a concert or a football match.

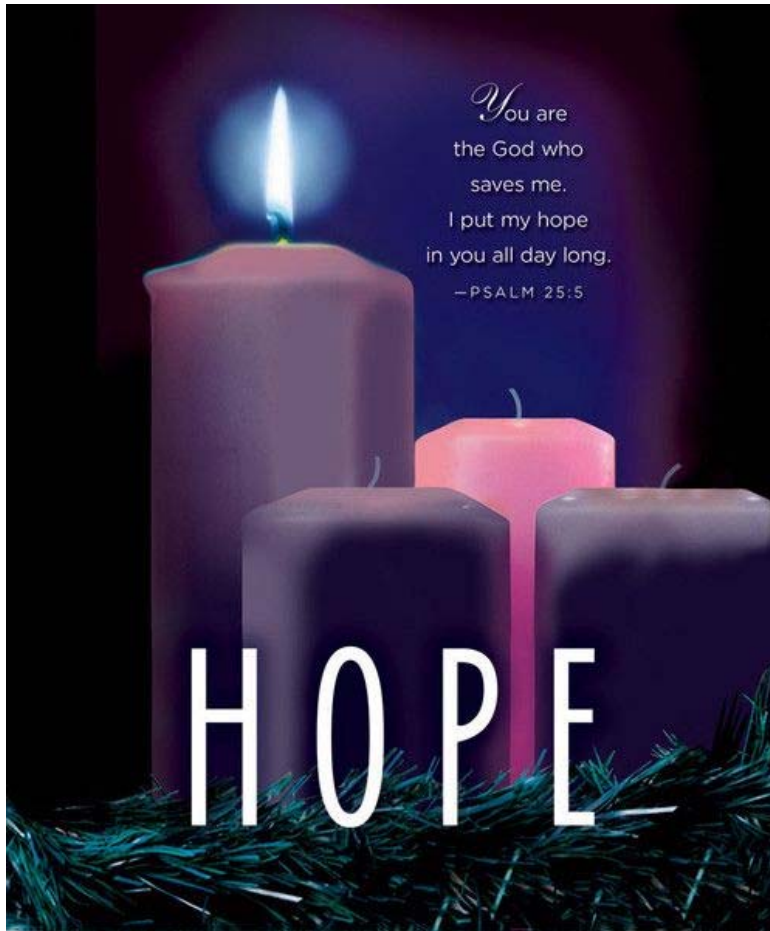
Advent is all about the second kind of waiting – in Advent “we wait in joy, in hope, and in anticipation for the wonderful event we are about to experience—the feast of Christmas, the coming of Christ into our lives in new ways, and the return of Christ in glory at the end of time.”

During this time of waiting in hope, we are invited to do practical things to help us to prepare spiritually for Christmas – things like giving a little bit of extra time to prayer and doing something extra to help someone else.



Text adapted from loyolapress.com

Wednesday 2nd December



We pray...

God of Love,
Your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us.
He is a sign of your love.
Help us to walk in that love during the weeks of Advent,
As we wait and prepare for his coming.
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

During Advent there is also a mantra which we often use.

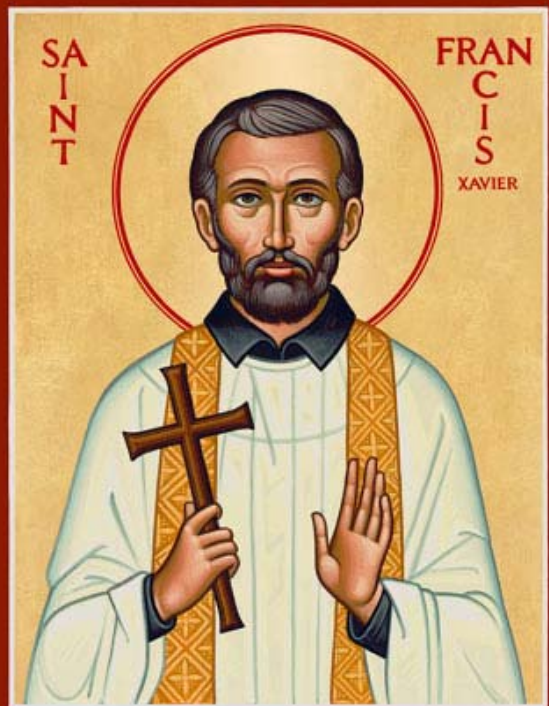
*It uses Aramaic words which mean "Come, Lord" . St. Paul used these words in his first letter to the Corinthians.
So, we say...*

Maranatha...Come, Lord Jesus Come.

First prayer from www.xavier.edu, author unknown

Idea: Do a chore for someone

Thursday 3rd December



Today is the feast of St. Francis Xavier who was one of the first Jesuits. The Jesuits were founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola and it was his spirituality which greatly influenced Marie Madeleine and which continues to inspire FCJ Sisters today.

Francis Xavier was born in what is now northern Spain in 1506. He met Ignatius of Loyola in Paris whilst studying at university and, together with some other companions, they made vows as Jesuits in 1534.

St. Francis Xavier is best known for the missionary work that he undertook in India, Japan and China, where he died in 1552. Francis had established and cared for many Christian communities in these countries and is now a Patron Saint of Catholic Missions.

We pray...

Loving God, on this feast of St. Francis Xavier we pray that like him we may help those in need, live lives rooted in prayer and bring Christ to all those we meet.

As we continue our Advent journey, may we be people of hope and be ever watchful for your presence in our lives. **Amen.**

Thursday 3rd December



Lord, Advent is a time of waiting for your arrival. All we can do is keep an eye out for your presence in ordinary things throughout the day. Be with us today and help us to do well in our work and friendships. Give each one of us a reminder of your closeness and we try to notice and give a nod in your direction. Amen.

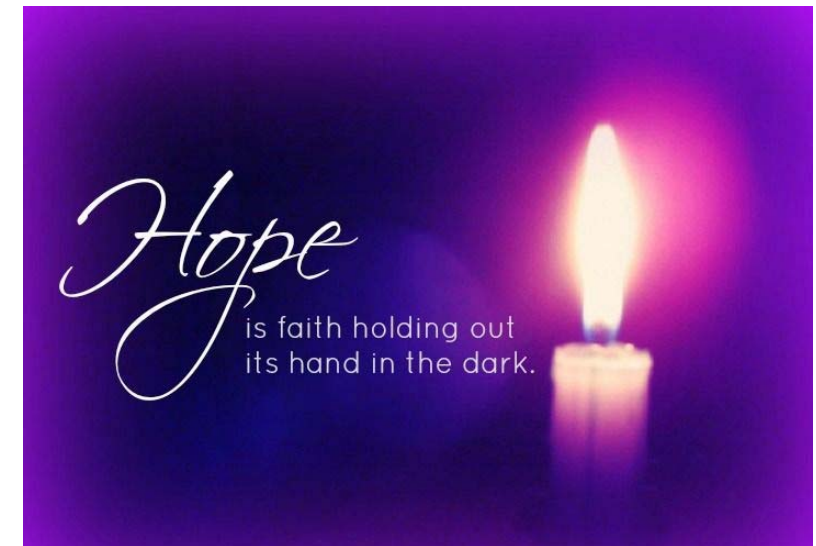
Idea: Give someone a compliment.

Friday 4th December

Advent Reflection

During this Season, which is one of **hope** as we look forward to the birth of Christ, may we learn to place our **trust** in God who never leaves us or abandons us. May we be open to learning from all our experiences and come to understand that God speaks to us through all the events of our lives, be they good or bad. In this way we can face the future with **confidence** knowing that God will give us what we need for each day.

Taken from the Le Chéile Book of Prayers and Reflections. The FCJ Schools in Ireland are part of the Le Chéile Schools Trust. "Le Chéile" is the Irish for "Together".



Continues on the next slide

Friday 4th December

We pray...

Lord, may our faith and trust in you become deeper this Advent.

Lord, speak to our hearts.

Lord, you were born poor among the poor, may our hearts always be open to those in need.

Lord, speak to our hearts.

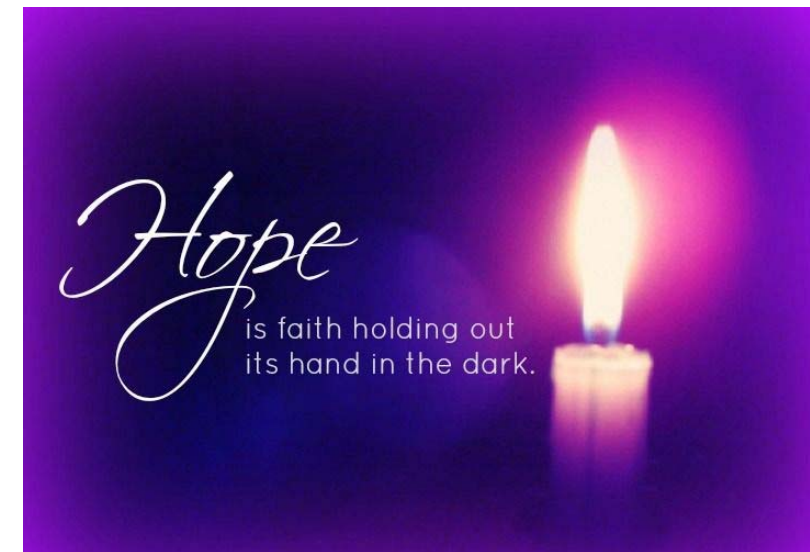
Lord, teach us to recognise the many blessings we have and to say thanks.

Lord, speak to our hearts.

Lord, help us to forgive those who have hurt us and to be reconciled with them.

Lord, speak to our hearts.

Amen.



Prayer from the Le Chéile Book of Prayers and Reflections

Friday 4th December



Examen

What or who has brought you hope this week?

What or who are you grateful for this week? Take a moment to thank God.

What has been challenging? Ask God to help you with this.

As you look ahead to the weekend, what would you like to ask of God?

Idea: Bake a treat for your family