

# Advent 2026

## Invited to Hope

Advent is a season of invitation, of the Lord inviting us and we responding by inviting the Lord into our hearts. We noted this in the invitation to Zacchaeus: "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house" (Lk 19:5). And Zacchaeus received him with joy.

This season is an opportunity to be inviting to neighbors, friends, and family, especially for those with whom we are estranged. That is the model that Jesus offered to the Apostles. Peter and Andrew, James and John, and all the rest were not perfect, but Jesus said, "Come after me," all the same. And Advent is more than simply a season of being inviting. The first week of Advent is traditionally recognized as the week of Hope, the theological virtue that prepares us to participate in the divine nature.

Bishop James Conley writes, *"The hope of Advent is not hope that Jesus will come back into the world at Christmas. Jesus did come into the world, two thousand years ago – God-made-man, Word made flesh, in Bethlehem. This is a historical fact. Hope is rooted in history, but hope is also about our present, and our future.*

*Hope is the knowledge that our lives have meaning – that each day that we live matters, and indeed, that we matter, because we are beloved by God and because he has an eternal plan for our lives."*

Advent is at most 28 days long, and we might think we focus on this virtue of hope for one brief week, but every time we celebrate Mass, we are called to this moment in the embolism, the prayer recited by the priest at the end of the Lord's Prayer.

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,  
graciously grant peace in our days,  
that, by the help of your mercy,  
we may be always free from sin  
and safe from all distress,  
**as we await the blessed hope  
and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.**

We are a people of hope, full of hope, not because we think there is a good chance that Christ will come again. We are not hopeful because we know the day and time of his arrival. We are filled with hope because to be a Christian disciple is to know God. Again, Bishop Conley *"To come to know God – the true God – means to receive hope," Pope Benedict XVI taught in his encyclical Spe salvi. Hope is knowing the Lord, believing in his promises, and trusting that he loves us, transforms us, and sanctifies us. Hope gives us the truest "basis" for our existence."*

I invite you to share in this hope, not just for yourself, but for those you love, and indeed for the whole world, that all might respond to the invitation of Jesus. Happy Advent, Deacon Todd