



## *First Sunday of Advent: Hope*

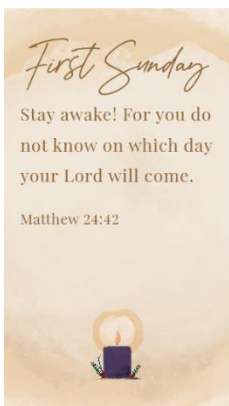
*It is what we require in times of adversity. It is what we engage when met with discouragement. It is consolation when bombarded by sorrow. It is a sense of confidence in the face of trials. It is knowledge of goodness when we are confronted by melancholy. It is the mercy we are promised when we are mired in our sinfulness. It is our companion as we strive to live our faith in love. It is the coming Christ of these most sacred Advent days. This dear friends is Hope.*

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*I am happy to report that I saw the pain specialist on Wednesday Morning at Allegheny General Hospital and I received some promising information with regard to the treatment of my chronic back pain that has increased exponentially during my recovery from my liver transplant. It is possible that I may have some noticeable relief in as little as four treatments. The treatments will involve some significant discomfort themselves; however, they could last for as long as one year and they are repeatable. God is continuing to be very good to me and assures me that my hope in Him is always well placed. As always, I want to thank you for your prayers for I know that I would not be the recipient of such great graces without them.*

*I had the opportunity on Wednesday evening to read over the Pope's General Audience, so I thought it would be helpful to summarize it for you here per my tradition (even though I was away for the entire beginning of the week as I reported in the main bulletin pages).*

*In continuing his catechesis on the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church, Pope Francis considers what traditionally are called "the fruits of the Holy Spirit", namely, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (cf. Gal 5:22). These fruits are the effect of our free cooperation with the grace of the Spirit at work in our lives. In particular he begins with one of these fruits, especially dear to him: the gift of spiritual joy. He begins by recalling the initial words of the Apostolic Exhortation **Evangelii Gaudium**: "The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those*



*who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Jesus joy is constantly born anew" (no. 1). Joy, fruit of the Spirit, has in common with any other human joy a certain feeling of fullness and fulfilment, which makes one wish it would last forever. There is the restlessness of the heart to seek beauty, peace, love, joy. The joy of the Gospel, evangelical joy, unlike any other joy, can be renewed every day and become contagious. It is the dual characteristic of joy as fruit of the Spirit: not only is it not subject to the inevitable wear of time, but it multiplies when it is shared with others! The word "Gospel" means glad tidings. Therefore, it cannot be communicated with a long face and somber countenance, but with the joy of those who have found the hidden treasure and the precious pearl. Francis asks us to remember Saint Paul's exhortation to the believers of the Church of Philippi, which he now addresses to us all, and which we heard at the beginning: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near" (Phil 4:4-5).*

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***PLEASE NOTE: Mass originally scheduled for Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM is being rescheduled for Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 12:05 PM due to a scheduling conflict!***

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***Combined Parish Council Meeting:*** *The combined parish council meeting that was cancelled on Thursday, November 21, 2024 is being rescheduled for this Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM in the rectory meeting room. PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND since there are some important parish matters that need to be discussed before the end of the calendar year. Thank you.*

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***Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup> is the First Friday of the Month.*** *There will be adoration of the Blessed Sacrament following the 12:05 Mass until 1:30 PM. Please join us for one or both. Spending this time with the Lord would make an outstanding addition to your Advent devotions!*

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***May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom 15:13)***