

Catholic

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The Light of Advent

A SEASON OF HOPE, PEACE, LOVE, AND JOY

SARAH REINHARD

Savor the Advent season with brief reflections based on the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. Each paragraph includes ways to strengthen and share your faith, as well as references to the Gospel readings found in the *Lectionary*. A longer reflection envelops the remainder of the Christmas season—which ends in January on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord—reminding us that Jesus' birth is so important it warrants an entire season of celebrating.



SHUTTERSTOCK

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Hope: First Week of Advent



First Sunday of Advent As we light the first purple candle of our Advent wreath, let's focus on the hope we have in the coming of the Lord. Remember, the angel's visit to Mary at the annunciation got things started. This week we walk with Mary as we prepare, alongside her, for the coming of our Savior.

Year A: Matthew 24:37–44

Year B: Mark 13:33–37

Year C: Luke 21:25–28, 34–36

Monday Have you ever watched how people react to a baby? More often than not, there's a lot of cooing and smiling. In my experience, this reaction grows exponentially as the age gap widens between the admirer and the bundle of joy. My grandparents and great-grandparents had far greater appreciation for my babies than I did at the time. I think this is a reflection of the hope we all see in a baby, as we get older. Today let's look for that hope in the eyes of someone younger. Let's share the message of hope through an encouraging word or a warm hug.

Matthew 8:5–11

Tuesday In the northern part of the world, this is a time of darkness and cold. The days are short. Christmas lights bring twinkles of hope. But so does the spiritual meaning behind the season. Find a small source of light today and think about how powerful the spark of faith is in the face of the darkness that surrounds us.

Luke 10:21–24

Wednesday Advent is a time, each year, to realize that we will be the host to a grand guest, even if that guest is only a baby—one who came into the world under the most meager circumstances. No matter how dirty or neglected we feel our soul is, we can find hope in the power of reconciliation and in the promise of forgiveness—through the grace of the sacraments. How will you act on that hope this week?

Matthew 15:29–37

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