



COMMUNITY GUIDE

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WEEKLY APPLICATION

“Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.

Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world.”

– St. Teresa of Avila

OVERVIEW

Week 1 Advent // Hope

Read: Luke 1:28 - 38

On the first week of Advent, we wait AND we prepare. We wait for the world to be as God intends it, the world as it should be. We wait for a world free of injustice, pain, and suffering. But it is not enough to simply wait, we must also prepare. Preparation goes beyond dreaming and invites us to participate in building a better world. As we wait and prepare, we look ahead to the hope of a better world that comes because of our partnership with God, not in spite of it. This preparation is a holy act of hope. In a culture obsessed with power, control, and immediate change, hope can seem inefficient and risky. Strategy dominates dreaming, cynicism dominates imagination, and what has been overshadowed what could be. Unfortunately, hope cannot be manufactured out of thin air. It must be chosen and cultivated. When we choose hope, we choose vulnerability, risk, and the possibility of disappointment. We hold tension as we expect things beyond our present moment. This type of hope coupled with courage is the fulcrum to change. We look back to Mary, the mother of Jesus, to find an example of this combination of courage and hope. In the Advent, Jesus has a human body to come through because a courageous young woman believes in God’s justice enough to courageously say yes to what seemed impossible.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Put yourself in Mary’s shoes. What do you imagine it would have been like to believe God for something she could not see?
2. In what ways have you felt drawn to help, “build a better world”?
3. Who inspires you to hope?
4. Whose lives, stories, and work remind you of the need to dream courageously?
5. Are there places that God is inviting you to hope or to recover hope that you have lost?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

God of all hope, help us to pray even when we feel nothing and see nothing. May we know, even when we experience little joy or faith in prayer, that you hear and respond to us at our weakest, our most dry, and in our doubting. Teach us to pray, to want to pray, or even to want to want to pray. You know where we are and meet us there. In Jesus’ name, amen.

IN THIS TOGETHER!