

Prayerful Reflections for Lighting the Advent Wreath Candles

Week 1 – Hope

Although Advent is a time of waiting, we wait actively, not passively, as a mother is active while expectantly waiting for the birth of her child and a farmer works hard while hoping for a good harvest. This Advent, may we bring hope to others by our word or action.

“I have felt the power of God transforming the fatigue of despair into the buoyancy of hope. I am convinced that the universe is under the control of a loving purpose, and that in the struggle for righteousness man has cosmic companionship.” -Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Week 2 – Peace

One way we can prepare during the Advent season (and beyond) is to practice peace in all we say and do. This Advent season, remember those throughout the world who do not experience peace and are most vulnerable as they wait for peace and a new, better life.

“O Lord, awaken the consciousness of all peoples and their leaders; raise up men and women full of love and generosity who can speak and act for peace, and show us new ways in which hatred can be left behind, wounds can be healed, and unity can be restored.” -Fr. Henri Nouwen

Week 3 – Joy

The 3rd Advent candle is pink, symbolizing joy that our wait for Jesus is almost over and Christmas is near. Joy is not simply happiness; it is the spirit of God even in times of difficulty. May we increase our own joy while we seek to spread joy to those in need.

“Joy is always the by-product of something else. As the various versions of The Prayer of St. Francis put it, we can never attain joy, consolation, peace, forgiveness, love, and understanding by actively pursuing them. We attain them by giving them out. That’s the great paradox at the center of all spirituality...Joy will come to us if we set about actively trying to create it for others.” -Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, O.M.I.

Week 4 – Love

God chose the Virgin Mary -- a poor, unwed, young mother to bear His Son – showing that all people have value in His divine plans. This season, let us look with love for value in all those who cross our paths, as we wait with our Blessed Mother for Christmas.

“What we would like to do is change the world—make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. ... We can throw our pebble in the pond and be confident that its ever widening circle will reach around the world. We repeat, there is nothing we can do but love, and, dear God, please enlarge our hearts to love each other, to love our neighbor, to love our enemy as our friend.” -Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement