Dear Parents,

“Rejoice, exult with gladness; Do not fear, dispel your sadness. Raise your hearts, the time is near; Christ the Lord will soon appear.”

This ancient Advent prayer-hymn is about living in hope. Hope is a sturdy virtue because it must put up with waiting, postponement and doubts that arise when it seems that what we hope for will not eventuate.

Being a Christian is about believing and hoping in God and this firstly requires that we seek Him. Seeking God requires that we don’t expect all the answers about God at once; it’s a lifetime’s quest; being a Christian is about the whole of life. As we experience annual observations such as Christmas, Easter and Advent, we might regard each of them as a door to be opened; as we step through each doorway there is the opportunity for a new sense of direction for our life.

Life is almost a constant Advent Season; we are constantly waiting to become…, to discover…, to complete…, to fulfil. However, Advent is also an invitation to remember, to see again the presence of God among us, God who is here from the beginning. “Jesus is the single human being who puts together in one life all the ‘God-light’ scattered over thousands of years from Abraham to Moses to David to Isaiah to John the Baptist to Mary and Joseph, to us here and now.” Author Unknown.

When we look at the big screen, we find that Jesus is not just a special baby but the One who brings together all the promises, all the hopes, all the visions, all the miracles, all the dreams of all the people of God. Jesus is our promise, our hope, our vision, our miracle, our dream, because Christmas is our story and Advent is our time to remember our collective past and look forward in hope to our future.

We all need periods of waiting in our lives for during such times we mature. We could be likened to grapes that spend time in vats and barrels, just waiting, but eventually maturing to become “full-bodied and rich with long, silky tannins”. We need times of waiting to savour the joy of fulfilment.

Sometimes we wait in darkness, when life is not so good, before we can appreciate the coming of dawn. Expectant mothers wait nine months before they can see the faces of their new children. Seeds are buried in the darkness of the earth before they can emerge into the light of day as new shoots. Ideas need to mature in minds before they can emerge as realities. So, Advent, the Season of waiting in hopeful expectation, fits in very well with our own life’s experiences of waiting, hoping and then enjoying the rewards of our hope and trust.
As we wait and listen in faith, we trust that memory and hope will come alive. Hopefully, when Advent has lead us to Christmas, we will be open to the realisation that God became man, not so that He can be with us but so we can be with Him.

“Come, long-expected Jesus, inspire me to see and appreciate my life in a new way. Help me to rethink the ordinary things in my life in terms of gratitude. Quicken my being with Your coming this Christmas. Amen.”

Peace and Best Wishes

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