

# Advent Reflections

December 9, 2019



Advent is universally regarded by Christians as a time of anticipation...a time of hope that the short, dark days of our external world during this season will not diminish our interior light, that current separations will be breached through reunions, that waiting in worry for the future will be replaced with peace in the here and now...that what seems impossible can, in fact, become possible. Today's readings remind us of our long history as a hope-filled people...and our need for confidence in ultimate fulfillment of our hope.

The reading from the book of Genesis speaks of a serious breach in relationship between God and mankind...a breach caused by man himself, a breach that seems impossible to mend. Yet the one wounded---our all-loving Father---promises a future restoration, with a plan for bringing this restoration to fruition.

*How many times have we ourselves caused a breach in our relationships through thoughtless words or actions...and because of pride or fear failed to extend---or accept---a heartfelt attempt for restoration or relationship?*

The responsorial psalm calls us to trust and hope...trust that in acknowledging the unchanging and unfailing love, kindness and greatness of our Creator, our hope that a true and lasting reconciliation with Him will not be in vain.

*Have we ever stopped trying...given up on the hope of mending a broken relationship...subscribed to the worldly perspective that "people can never change"?*

The letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians reminds us that our hope lies in remembering the blessings we have *already* received...a hope that brings confidence that having been chosen by God we can be assured of continued

blessings...even if we don't recognize the blessings as such right now.

*Do we succumb to sadness and despondency when things don't go our way, or do we look at the challenges of our lives through the lens of hope, confident that even our trials ultimately bring blessings that we cannot yet recognize?*

Finally, the Gospel reading from St. Luke reminds us that no matter how unlikely a situation might seem...*nothing* is impossible with God! We need to hold fast to our conviction that the seemingly most improbable, impossible situation can be healed in the most improbable, impossible way by our God of possibilities.

*"Hope is not what you'd expect; it is what you would never dream. It is a wild, improbable tale with a pinch-me-I'm-dreaming ending... Hope is not a granted wish or a favor performed; no, it is far greater than that. It is a zany, unpredictable dependence on a God who loves to surprise us out of our socks." – Max Lucado*

*Ginny Topolski,  
Director, Human Resources*

## **Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

### **Reading 1 [GN 3:9-15, 20](#)**

After the man, Adam, had eaten of the tree,  
the LORD God called to the man and asked him, "Where are you?"  
He answered, "I heard you in the garden;  
but I was afraid, because I was naked,  
so I hid myself."  
Then he asked, "Who told you that you were naked?  
You have eaten, then,  
from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat!"  
The man replied, "The woman whom you put here with me—  
she gave me fruit from the tree, and so I ate it."  
The LORD God then asked the woman,  
"Why did you do such a thing?"  
The woman answered, "The serpent tricked me into it, so I ate it."

Then the LORD God said to the serpent:  
"Because you have done this, you shall be banned  
from all the animals  
and from all the wild creatures;  
on your belly shall you crawl,  
and dirt shall you eat  
all the days of your life.  
I will put enmity between you and the woman,

and between your offspring and hers;  
he will strike at your head,  
while you strike at his heel.”

The man called his wife Eve,  
because she became the mother of all the living.

**Responsorial Psalm [PS 98:1, 2-3AB, 3CD-4](#)**

**R.(1) Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous deeds.**

Sing to the LORD a new song,  
for he has done wondrous deeds;  
His right hand has won victory for him,  
his holy arm.

**R. Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous deeds.**

The LORD has made his salvation known:  
in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.  
He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness  
toward the house of Israel.

**R. Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous deeds.**

All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation by our God.  
Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;  
break into song; sing praise.

**R. Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous deeds.**

**Reading 2 [EPH 1:3-6, 11-12](#)**

Brothers and sisters:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has blessed us in Christ  
with every spiritual blessing in the heavens,  
as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world,  
to be holy and without blemish before him.  
In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ,  
in accord with the favor of his will,  
for the praise of the glory of his grace  
that he granted us in the beloved.

In him we were also chosen,  
destined in accord with the purpose of the One  
who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will,  
so that we might exist for the praise of his glory,  
we who first hoped in Christ.

**Alleluia [SEE LK 1:28](#)**

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you;  
blessed are you among women.

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gospel [LK 1:26-38](#)**

The angel Gabriel was sent from God  
to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,  
to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph,  
of the house of David,  
and the virgin's name was Mary.  
And coming to her, he said,  
"Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you."  
But she was greatly troubled at what was said  
and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.  
Then the angel said to her,  
"Do not be afraid, Mary,  
for you have found favor with God.  
Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son,  
and you shall name him Jesus.  
He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High,  
and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,  
and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever,  
and of his Kingdom there will be no end."  
But Mary said to the angel,  
"How can this be,  
since I have no relations with a man?"  
And the angel said to her in reply,  
"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,  
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.  
Therefore the child to be born  
will be called holy, the Son of God.  
And behold, Elizabeth, your relative,  
has also conceived a son in her old age,  
and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;  
for nothing will be impossible for God."  
Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.  
May it be done to me according to your word."  
Then the angel departed from her.