

Christian Perspectives

The first Sunday of Advent we often talk about hope. We hope for many things in our lives. Expecting parents hope for a good pregnancy and a healthy child. Children hope for that special toy which will be eagerly unwrapped at Christmas. Teenagers hope for acceptance and life free of bullying. Young adults hope to meet that special someone with whom they will build a relationship. Adults hope for a good job that offers advancement opportunity and a salary that exceeds the bills that come in dutifully every month. Older adults hope they will have a quality of life that offers them dignity along with their greying and thinning hair. We hope we will be disease and accident free throughout life and we will not hear any alarming words coming from our doctor's mouths. Yet these hopes are all very Canadian. Others in the world hope for freedom from oppression or release from terror or peace in war torn lands. Some hope for food and shelter and access to clean water. Some hope that someone will see the potential in them and some just hope to be loved.

As we approach Christmas I can't help but wonder for what Mary and Joseph hoped. Mary and Joseph, on their way to Bethlehem, to register themselves for the census must have had hopes. They must have hoped that they would make the trek even though Mary was very pregnant; hoped that when they arrived they would be able to find hospitality, some shelter from the elements as it became painfully apparent that the time was at hand; hoped that even though they lived simple lives the words of the angel spoken to them about who their child was to become would be true.

Much of the Hebrew Testament and the Christian Testament found in the Christian Bible points us to another hope. It is a hope for better days that is reflected in peoples yearning as they lived their daily lives. It is a hope held for generations that one day they would find freedom to be the people God wanted them to be.

Here a hope unfolds that encourages us to cast our gaze to a day when all will be renewed; where heartbreak, sorrow, fear, war, injustice, greed, indeed, all things that rob us from fully living will be washed away. This is a hope that changes our living and in a small way brings that new day closer.

Advent is a season of waiting, a journey toward fulfillment marked by urgent anticipation; marked by a hopeful longing for the realization of what has been promised.

For what do you hope?