

HOPE

Jean and I were driving home from Sacred Heart Hospital in Springfield. We had been visiting a patient. There were six of us including the patient.

I thought of the “moment” we shared before we left. We joined hands in a circle around the bed. My words were of thanksgiving for our friendship and our prayerful hopes at this uncertain time.

It was the first week that some Christians call Advent. The theme for the first week was Hope.

I couldn’t help but think of all the situations where hope seems in short supply. Hope hangs by a thread. There are so many seemingly hopeless world and life situations. Every election brings hope to some and hopelessness to others. What worries you most right now? Make your own list.

A biblical text often used (and misused) during Advent has words of the Prophet called Isaiah. The words are apparently from a traditional coronation hymn, used every time a new king was anointed.

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called ‘Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.’ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.”

Some version of great hope emerges with the inauguration of every new president. It never turns out as expected, but we always hope. Sometimes the hope is slight indeed.

I found myself humming a tune I’m not a great hummer. A few words...

“Whispering hope...”

*“Hope with a gentle persuasion
whispers a comforting word....*

Wait...till the darkness is over...

Wait...till the tempest is done...

*Hope...for the sunshine tomorrow
after the darkness is gone.”*

Traditional Christian thinking is that the Christmas season is a time of waiting. Wait...wait...wait. Wait and hope.

Yes, hope *whispers* very softly sometimes, if it appears at all.

Our house is 45 miles from Sacred Heart Hospital. When we got home I went to work untangling and testing the lights of Christmas. I got them up both inside and out. We set our Advent candle holder on the mantle.

I cannot remember a Christmas when there was no darkness. Many of the causes in which I believed and worked began in darkness with dim hope. I have seen failed hope. The Christmas encouragement is to trust hope more than fear.

So Jean lit the first candle for Hope. It flickered but did not go out. We hope it never goes out.

— Art Morgan December 3, 2016