



A LIGHT

The Fourth
Sunday

IN THE DARKNESS

“My Soul Magnifies the Lord”

Luke 1:39–45

When Mary visits Elizabeth, she exclaims, “Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled” (v. 45). Blessed was Mary for her hope and her faith. Blessed are we, to have this same hope and faith in the fulfillment of God’s promise to his followers!

The way that Mary’s faith was fulfilled was amazing. It wasn’t quite the royal birth that one would expect for the King of Kings. Instead, it was quite radically the opposite. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes, “In this poverty heaven’s glory was made manifest” (525, cf. Lk 2:6-7).

It makes you think, doesn’t it? Perhaps your faith is shaken when things don’t seem to be going according to plan. The situation of the Lord’s birth certainly wouldn’t match most parents’ hopes. But God has a plan, and he never fails. And what joy this brings! Even in the dark of winter or the dark of a spiritual winter, we can find joy in the fulfillment of our hope and faith. Our souls can magnify the Lord — he is coming!

ADVENT
Prayer



**Lord God,
thank you for
the hope and joy
that you offer us!**

*“The Virgin today brings
into the world the Eternal*

*And the earth offers a
cave to the Inaccessible.*

*The angels and shepherds
praise him*

*And the magi advance
with the star,*

For you are born for us,

*Little Child, God
eternal!”*

— *Kontakion of
Romanos the Melodist
(CCC 525)*





Saint Joseph

If anyone had to rely on a feeling that things will turn out for the best, it was Saint Joseph. He took in Mary, risking his reputation and accepting a responsibility that he at first didn't understand. But he had hope and faith, and he forged on to serve as the father and protector of the Savior.

Saint Joseph's trust was called upon again when Jesus was a baby. An angel appeared to Saint Joseph in a dream and told him to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape King Herod, who was seeking to kill the newborn king (see Mt 2:13-18). Joseph didn't call up his friends in Jerusalem to confirm or Google places to stay in Egypt. He fled with faith, believing that what he desired — safety for his family — would be fulfilled.

Like Saint Joseph, we can proceed with the quiet confidence that Saint Joseph exhibited so well in such a tremendous role.



Daily LIVING

”The more a person loves God, the more reason he has to hope in him. This hope produces in the saints an unutterable peace, which they preserve even in adversity, because as they love God, and know how beautiful he is to those who love him, they place all their confidence and find all their repose in him alone.”

— Saint Alphonsus Liguori, Doctor of the Church

FAMILY FOCUS

Celebrate Mary's Hope

This week, in addition to lighting the fourth candle of your Advent wreath, light a candle for Mary to celebrate her steadfast faith and hope in the darkness. You can even decorate it. Choose a white pillar and place it in a glass candleholder. If you have time, cut and glue an image of Mary to the outside of the glass. The kids can add beads, stickers, and other decorations to make the candle as joyful as Elizabeth and Mary were when they met! Roses are traditionally associated with Mary. The star over the manger is a symbol of Jesus' birth in the manger. And blue is often the color of Mary's robes. Help your kids say the Hail Mary together while they decorate.



TALK About It:

How can Mary help our family find faith and hope?

Catechism CONNECTION

Advent teaches us that joyful expectation unfolds in the present, moment by moment. Our liturgical prayer teaches us that the Spirit of Christ is offered to us at all times. Yet, an encounter can only happen in the present: “It is in the present that we encounter him, not yesterday nor tomorrow, but today.”

— Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2659

FOR REFLECTION:

What does the season of Advent teach us about trusting God?