

Jubilee Year of Hope

Advent: *Jesus is Our Hope* (1 Tim. 1:1)

The Advent hymn *Come, O Long Expected Jesus* is a prayer of hope, asking that He come because we need a Savior. Jesus came to set us free from our attachment to bad habits, which creates barriers and can even separate us from our friendship with Him. Due to His unconditional love for us, Jesus desires to help us break away from sin so that we can be more closely united to Him.

During Advent, set aside time for quiet prayer, to watch and wait for the coming of the Christ Child into our heart at Christmas. Let us allow Jesus to spiritually renew us with greater hope, peace and joy, even amidst difficulties.

The first verse:

Come, O long expected Jesus,
Born to set Your people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Free us from captivity.

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The Advent hymn *Come, O Long Expected Jesus* is about hope as it refers to Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah promised throughout the Old Testament. Jesus is “the hope of all the earth” because He brings salvation to all people, fulfilling God the Father’s universal plan for redemption. Jesus is the “dear desire of every nation” because He is the ultimate answer to the deepest longings and needs of every person.

Let us make a good confession before Christmas to purify our hearts for the celebration of the Incarnation – God becoming man to save us from Satan, sin and death.

The second verse:

Israel’s strength and consolation,
You, the *hope* of all the earth,
Dear desire of every nation,
Come, and save us by Your birth.

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The Advent hymn *Come, O Long Expected Jesus* states that He fulfills all the prophecies about the coming of our Savior. Jesus is born a helpless child, but He is the King of kings who establishes the kingdom of God on earth who desires to reign in our heart as the

Christ. Let us stay focused during these days of Advent that Jesus is our only hope, asking Him to increase this gift within us.

The third verse:

Born your people to deliver;
Born a child and yet a king!
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Your gracious kingdom bring.

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The Advent hymn *Come, O Long Expected Jesus* is a prayer of hope, asking that by the grace of the Holy Spirit we allow Jesus to reign in our lives. It is Jesus' perfect actions of His life, crucifixion, death and resurrection that are the "all-sufficient merit" that saves us and makes us ready for eternal life in heaven. In essence, this is a prayer for deep personal surrender to God and a plea for salvation through Christ's work, not our own doing.

Let us open our hearts with great hope to encounter the living Christ Child on Christmas, especially when we receive the Holy Eucharist.

The fourth verse:

By Your own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Your all-sufficient merit
Raise us to Your glorious throne.

December 28, 2025

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Christmas: Jesus is Our Hope (1 Tim. 1:1)

As we continue to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child, let us seek deeper communion with the Son of God who is our hope. We are reminded at Christmas that "each year, as the Church recalls this mystery, she urges us to renew the memory of the great love God has shown us. This holy season teaches us that Christ's coming was not only for the benefit of contemporaries; His power has still to be communicated to us all. We shall share His power, if, through holy faith and the Sacraments, we willingly accept the grace Christ earned for us, and live by that grace and in obedience to Christ." (Saint Charles Borromeo, bishop).

January 4, 2026

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The New Year 2026: Jesus is Our Hope (1 Tim. 1:1)

Moving forward in this New Year, we are called to be beacons of hope in the world, as called for in Romans 15:13: *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”* Let us continue to ask the Lord to increase our faith and hope in Him so that as beacons, we will help others to encounter Jesus through acts of love and mercy.

The *Jubilee Year of Hope* officially ends on January 6th when Pope Leo XIV closes the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. A Mass to close the Jubilee Year in the Diocese of La Crosse will be celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Joseph the Workman by Msgr. Richard Gilles, 10 a.m. on December 28th. All are welcome.