



# The HOLY FROG Blog

Honour Others, Lower Yourself and Fully Rely On God.



## The ADVENT of HOPE...

Every year around this time we have a certain character join us in our house. He doesn't do a great deal, just sort of hangs about really, but his presence in our kitchen brings excitement and anticipation for what lies ahead. His arrival means that over the coming days, we will be **full of hope** and, more importantly, full of chocolate! The Snowman Advent calendar is the legend that reminds us Christmas is coming! We hope!

We all need hope right? But when all else seems to have failed can you still have hope?

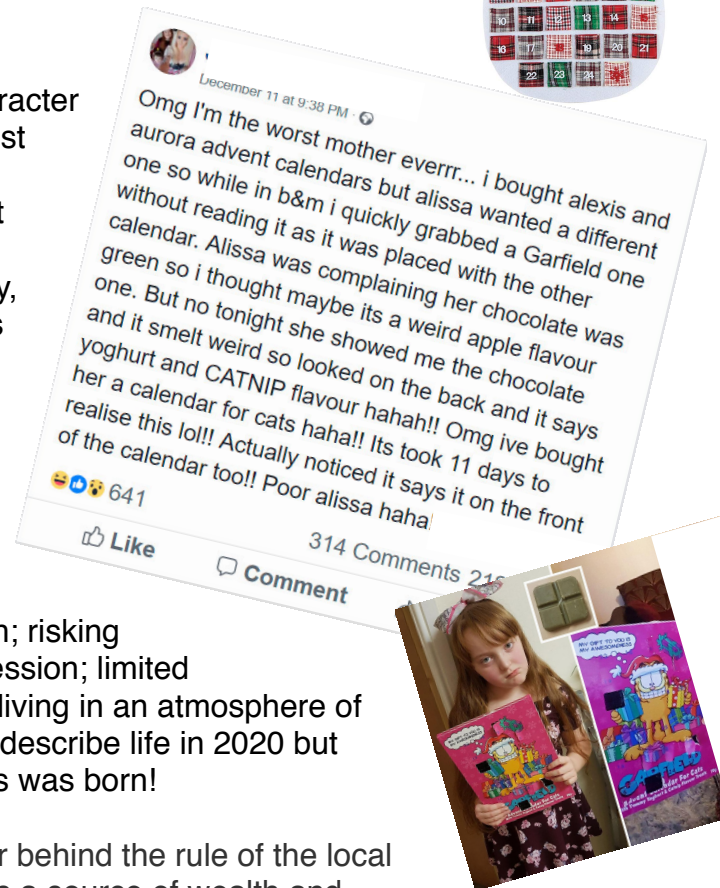
Oppressed by a ruling power that you didn't elect; subjected to 'unfair' local restrictions and political agenda; living under constant fear of death; risking punishment if you step out of line; coping with recession; limited resources, disease, illness, social restrictions and living in an atmosphere of **misery, doom, no hope, and despair**, might well describe life in 2020 but actually, this was Judea around the time that Jesus was born!

Everyone in Judea knew that Rome was the power behind the rule of the local government, King Herod and his forces. Rome was a source of wealth and innovation but also corruption, tyranny and fear. The Jews were desperate to see God do something. The Old Scriptures spoke of **God's promise that there would be 'one sent from God'**, who would 'set captives free', 'establish his kingdom and reign forever'.

**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name is called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government there will be no end. He will reign on David's then and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. Isaiah 9:6-7**

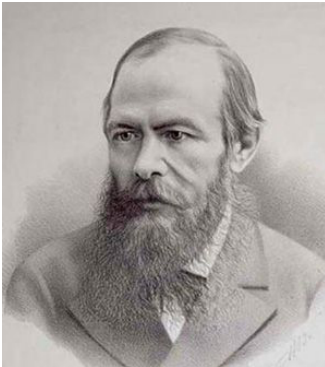
But, in the hundreds of years since these words were written, there had been no rescue, no saviour, no response to their heartfelt cries to God. Although many 'messiahs' had come and gone, zealous for God, for freedom, perhaps for personal gain, each time, the Romans had come down hard and with little mercy. Incredibly, **they held onto hope, trusting God's word**, looking forward to the arrival of the Chosen One. **The Messiah.**

In the ancient world 'Advent'(translated as 'arrival', 'coming' or 'presence') described the arrival of a king or emperor to a province. But it could also indicate the presence of divinity, which shows itself with power. How the Jews longed to see the ADVENT of **God's king** that would save them! **Someone to put their hope in.**





We often use the word 'hope' to express a kind thought or wish such as 'I hope you are well', 'I hope to see you soon' or 'I hope I pass my exam'. On occasions we might be able to influence the outcome of such a wish but the foundation of this hope may, in part, rely on OUR ability to affect the outcome. You want it badly enough perhaps you can help it to happen. But in the Bible, **hope is the confident expectation that what God has promised, will happen** and its strength is in His faithfulness. In other words, Christian belief is not founded on HOPE in and of ourselves, but in God and what HE has given to us. **Jesus - the ADVENT of HOPE**



**So What?** Have you ever felt that hopeless? Possibly a time where you felt out of control of life's circumstances? Through, illness, losing loved ones, work issues, family stress, peer pressure, friendships, negative world affairs, unmet goals or low self image, you may feel that hope is slipping away. Like the people of Judea (and many of us) you long for things to change. You may even have cried out where is God? What's keeping him? Why doesn't he do something? When will he appear? How long must I wait? There is Hope. **The Russian writer Dostoyevsky, who knew enough about worldly hopelessness wrote this: "Other men see only a hopeless end, but the Christian rejoices in an endless hope!"**

During this coming season of Christmas we are reminded by scriptures, carols and traditions that, even though humankind chose to turn away from God and the world seems bleak and broken at times, **God works to complete the restoration of humanity** through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. As the people of Judea looked to the advent of God's chosen one with hope, knowing God would show up, so we can draw strength in trusting his word as this Christmas, once again **we celebrate the fact that he kept his promise!** Quite a bit more to chew over than a little square of chocolate from an advent calendar isn't it?!

### Chaplain's Challenge:

1. List 10 things to do when you are waiting in a queue
2. What's the longest you've waited for something? Why did you wait?
3. what does Christmas mean to YOU?
4. What do you hope for yourself, your family, your community?
5. How does believing in God give you hope? Even in tough times?



### Read and Reflect:

**"Rejoice in hope, be patient in trials, be constant in prayer."** Romans 12:12  
and **"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."** Romans 15:13

### Prayer:

**Heavenly Father**, during the Christmas season, perhaps more than other times, we hear about the advent of hope that comes through your son Jesus Christ. Born in humility, his death and resurrection offers hope to those who believe. Hope of an eternal relationship with you God that starts the moment we invite you into our life. May we have courage and faith enough to entrust our hearts, our mind and our lives to you, who loved us enough to send your Son to us. This truly is a season of hope. **Amen.**

To chat about the blog, Christian faith, prayer requests and everything else get in touch:

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May we know real life lived out in faith, as individuals and as a community.

