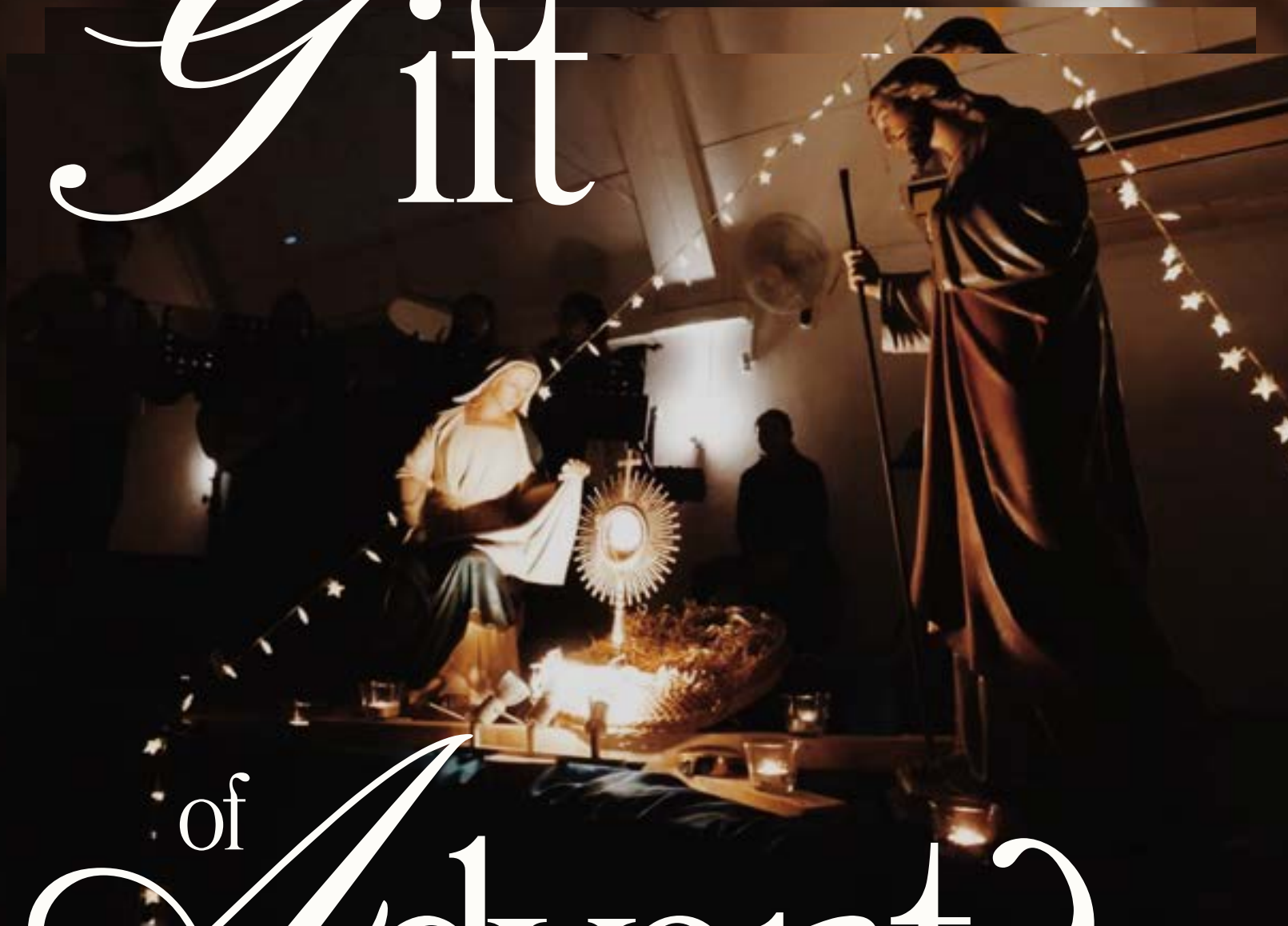


What is the

Gift



of

Advent?



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The gift of *Hope*

As we enter into the first week of Advent, the candle signifying **Hope** is lit, representing the feelings of expectation and anticipation of Jesus' birth.

Let us **pause to ponder on the magnificence of this Hope**, held entirely within the Christ child. Only through the birth of Jesus, does God come to dwell among us; only through the birth of Jesus, is redemption and transformation of our fallen humanity made possible; only through the birth of Jesus, is there the promise of eternal life with God.

He is the beginning and the end – all that has happened and is to happen in our lives are made possible because of that one moment in Bethlehem, when a baby was born in a manger.

Hope: a gift freely given

The gift of this Hope is given to us by the Father, who “*so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*” *John 3:16.*

It is a gift that is **undeserved and unearned**, but **freely given in full measure**. Most importantly, though, it needs to be *received*. Contemplate, therefore, on how Hope looks like in your life in this season. It could look like many things – hoping for a job offer, the healing of a loved one, the grace to move through the day, and so forth.

However Hope may look like in your life, do you desire to rediscover and reclaim this gift this Advent?

Advent:

a call to live in Hope

In today's Gospel, the words of Saint Mark remind us that this season of preparation is not characterised by passivity. Rather, it is formed by **active anticipation**; a choosing to hold on to and cultivate hope in our lives through any circumstance.

In this way, a sense of pregnancy emerges, as gazes are turned again to Jesus and the promise of His coming. **Hope begins to grow anew in our hearts.** We become excited again about a goodness and joy beyond our comprehension, that is about to arrive for *us*.

Reflect:

1. Recall a moment when you felt like hope was running thin. How did God shine in your darkness then?
2. What does hope look like in your life now? How have you been living with hope?
3. Jesus desires to enter into your heart this Advent. How can you move to receive the gift of God in a new way?

Invitations

for the week:

- 1. Watch: Bible Project – Hope**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WYNBjJSYvE&ab_channel=BibleProject
- 2. Listen: Be Born in Me – Francesca Battistelli**
<https://open.spotify.com/track/6BJYSaOO1wiAj47pqT4vj6?si=e7227d1d2f074569>