

## **REFLECTION FOR ADVENT SUNDAY - MARSEILLE CHAPLAINCY 2018**

### **The Advent Hope – God’s answer to our disappointment.**

One of the main themes of the season of Advent is Hope.

In Jesus we experience the fulfilment of God’s promises and so we look forward to the reminder of that as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Saviour at Christmas. We also look forward to the return of Christ in glory but this hope seems an awfully long time coming. Many feel disappointed that it hasn’t happened yet!

There are many times in our lives when we experience disappointment and we can easily fall into depression when we feel let down by others or things just haven’t turned out as we expected.

One of the saddest verses in the Bible is in Luke’s gospel on that first Easter day when the two disciples are walking home to Emmaus disconsolate because of the death of Jesus.

**“but we had hoped** that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.” (Luke 24;21)

So often “we had hoped....” and had our hopes dashed just as these disciples had. Jesus instead of being a triumphant king was crucified, dead and buried. Their hopes totally destroyed. Yet something amazing happens on that sad walk home to transform them.

A stranger draws alongside them and listens to their story, their account of all that had gone on in Jerusalem over the last few days. He listens to their despair and grief. This stranger then reveals truths from scripture which open the door of understanding for them, helping them to see things from a completely different perspective. Finally this stranger is persuaded to stay and have supper with them and in the breaking and blessing of the bread light finally dawns for them. This is Jesus their risen Lord who has walked with them, listened to them, taught them by making God’s plans known to them and finally making himself known to them. Disappointment transformed to joy!!

This is the work of Emmanuel – God with us. He promised to be with us always and His quiet, often unseen presence changes our perspective and restores our hope. More than that it gives us the message of salvation to share. Those two disciples raced back to Jerusalem with the Good News – Jesus is alive – we have seen Him. And they had a Bible study to share too from the Master himself!

If you are struggling with disappointment today then take time this week to pour out your heart to Jesus. He is always listening. Then take time to wait on Him for his encouragement and perspective. Trust him that you will receive his comfort and know that he can transform your situation or at least your understanding of your situation and restore your hope.

Let me end this reflection with probably my favourite bible verse from St Paul’s letter to the Romans

***And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. Romans 5:5.***

This is the first of four reflections for each week of Advent. I pray that they will be a blessing to you. Sue Goodwin (One of the Interim Chaplains!).